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ABSTRACT

This report describes the New York City public school system's experiences with decentralization since 1970. The report includes an introductory chapter explaining the conditions that led to the adoption of decentralization; analytical case studies of eight New York City decentralized school districts; and two concluding chapters on findings and implications. The case studies describe the context of decentralization in each district; relationships between school boards and superintendents and between district offices and schools, professional staff, and the community; emergent management styles; and the effects of decentralization on student performance, attendance, and later academic attainment. It is suggested that the New York City experience does not provide an extensive test of decentralization because of legal ambiguities and inadequate implementation. Nevertheless, it is concluded that even with limited decentralization, significant improvements are evident. Among the findings of the study are: 1) student performance improved in many poor, minority districts; 2) the number of curriculum innovations, staff training programs, and programs to link schools and communities increased markedly; 3) more positive changes occurred in districts where superintendents had greater authority and office staffs were more stable; 4) effective superintendents' management styles varied; and 5) decentralization did not enhance parent participation. The report presents a model outlining the elements of district effectiveness, and concludes by identifying some unresolved problems in decentralizing districts. (Author/MJL)

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SCHOOL DECENTRALIZATION IN NEW YORK CITY

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UTILIZATION

Professor Rogers has been invited to be on a panel at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) meeting in New York City next March with Al Shanker, Diane Ravitch, and others to discuss the past 20 years of development of the New York City school system. He has also had a paper accepted by Social Policy, based on the decentralization study, and it will be published in a coming issue.

SUMMARY OF NYC DECENTRALIZATION STUDY

This study constitutes an assessment of the New York City public school system's experiences with decentralization since its inception in 1970. The report contains an introductory chapter indicating the conditions leading to the adoption of decentralization and the methodology of the study, 8 case study chapters, and two concluding ones on findings and policy implications. A central theme of the study is that the New York City experience does not constitute that extensive a test of decentralization because of ambiguities in the law and inadequate implementation. Community school districts have functioned under limited and vaguely defined powers. Despite that, however, as the summary of the results of this research indicate, significant improvements are evident, even with the limited decentralization that has occured.

Some of the main findings are: (1) Student performanceas measured by reading scores, attendance, and placement in specialized high schools has improved, on balance, in many poor, minority districts and remained relatively stable in certain others, even under conditions of marked demographic changes. (2) Curriculum innovations, the development of programs linking schools with community and other outside agencies, the emergence of a more ethnically integrated staff, the establishment of significant staff training programs, and of many school-based programs that involve much teacher and some parent involvement have increased markedly. (3) These posittive changes occur with greater frequency in districts with "strong" superintendents whose community school boards have delegated much administrative and even policy authority to them and with stable (long serving) district office staffs, both of which are associated with political stability in the district at large. (4) The management styles of superintendents whose districts have experienced such positive changes vary widely, however, suggesting a variety of ways of running an effective district. (5) Parent participation, contrary to the hopes of decentralization advocates, has not been enhanced that much in most districts, though such other factors as the economy (many people work longer hours) and the city's fiscal crisis (generating wide-spread feelings of pessimism among local parents about prospects for school improvements) have contributed. (6) There remain many unresolved problems, even in the more effective districts, including the selection and responsibilities of CSBs, their relations with the superintendent, and problems of planning in a situation of declining resources and where critical budget and staffing decisions (including collective bargaining) are made at higher levels of government.

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CHAPTER I: Introduction

Historical Context

The New York City public schools embarked on a critical social experiment in 1970, after more than a decade of turbulence regarding the quality of educational services it delivered, the extent of equality in the way they were delivered to different raical and ethnic groups, and the accountability of the system to the publics it was supposed to serve. Many big city school systems experienced such turbulence, and New York was obviously not alone in that regard. As the biggest of these systems, however, with by far the largest central headquarters bureaucracy, it came under increasing attack from a board spectrum of citizen groups for its alleged failure to be responsive to the many changes going on in the city. Blacks, in particular, resented the fact that the system had failed to improve the quality of education for them, either through compensatory programs, or through desegregation. Other groups, including Hispanics but not limited to them, had also become alienated from an agency that was increasingly seen as too insulated, as grossly mismanaged, and as dominated by professional educators who had successfully deflected and absorbed all past efforts at reform, without those efforts having had an significant impact on the schools' performance.*

By the mid 1960s, community control became the slogan and rallying cry of reform advocates. Coinciding with, among other developments, the black power movement, various student movements, "new left" attacks on bureaucratic institutions in general, as well as with the perceived failure of all past school reform strategies, this slogan had wide appeal, both in New York City and elsewhere. The movement's main target was the professional power of the educators who were seen as having a monopoly over definitions of professionalism (what and how things are taught) and as having consolidated their power over the funding of the New York City schools to such a point that they had become increasingly unresponsive to legitimate demands of citizen groups for improved education. The movement soon spread to many other big cities, but it reached its greatest intensity and had perhaps its most effects in New York. Its main goal was to decentralize the New York City school system into a series of smaller community school districts, with each governed by an elected community school board that would hold the educators of their district accountable for the quality of education there and would have significant power over budget, staffing, and program decisions.*

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* See, for example, Marilyn Gittell, Participants and Participation; Praeger 1967; and David Rogers, 110 Livingston Street, Random House, 1968.

Academics as well as citizen groups soon became strong advocates of this strategy, arguing that there were many potential benefits from pursuing it, including: (1) more accountability of the educators to their school and district constituencies, thereby making them more responsive to expressed community interest; (2) more parent and community participation in educational decision making; (3) increasing educational innovation in the development of programs to meet student and community needs; (4) a more organic relation of schools to communities through better fits of curriculum to local need, of staff orientations to local need, and through increasing program linkages of schools to community and other outside agencies; (5) more jobs within the school system for district residents; (6) the development of more local level leadership; (7) improved legitimacy of the schools as institutions; and, ultimately, (8) improved student performance.*

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* See, for example, the famous Bundy report, Reconnection for Learning, New York City Mayor's Advisory Panel on Decentralization of the New York City Schools, 1967. For good historical accounts, see Mario Fantini and Marilyn Gittell, Decentralization : Achieving Reform, Praeger, New York, 1973, and Joseph Cronin, The Control of Urban Schools, see Free Press, 1973.

The educators argue, mainly through the teachers' union and professional associations of school supervisors, that community control would have devastating effects on the schools. Local groups without that much of an interest in improving education would solidify their power base, they argued, in ways that would increase segregation, the use of racial and ethnic criteria in staff appointments, parochialism in curriculum (e.g., black culture program), nepotism, and local corruption. Moreover, they argued, breaking up the system into many, small districts would be very inefficient, leading to much duplication of administrative and curriculum services, abandoning the important economies of scale that the centralized system provided. And the net result of such a politicized, racist, parochial, and inefficient system would be deteriorating schools and declining student performance.

After a long and bitter struggle between the advocates of community control and the opposition, the New York State Legislature passed the 1969 Decentralization Law, establishing a New York City Community School District System with 31 districts, administered by a Chancellor and a seven-member central board.** Community school boards under this system are elected by a proportional representation procedure and consist of nine members. They, in turn, are empowered to select a community superintendent and principal, determine priorities for curriculum and instruction, and oversee schools and other facilities in the district. The law limits their powers, however, with many checks and balances from the Chancellor and central board.

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* Many of these points are covered well in Alan Altschuler, Community Control, Pegasus, 1970. See also Henry M. Levin, (ed.), Community Control of Schools, Clarion, Simon and Schuster, 1970.

** There are now 32 districts.

Though there has been much public discussion over the years about the results of this decentralization experiment, including extensive commentary in the mass media,* there has been little systematic assessment of what actually happened under decentralization, particularly in the community school district and schools themselves.** Much of the political turbulence over the schools has died down considerably since the 1960s, and that may, indeed, be one of the many consequences of decentralization. But the issues raised in the controversy about how best to govern and manage the schools are still important. And they are important, not only for New York City, but for other big cities and for other service delivery agencies as well. Decisions as to whether to decentralize or centralize them, and in what ways, may well have profound implications for the way services are delivered and for the future of cities, notwithstanding the importance of such other facts as their level of resources.

We undertook this study to begin to address the question of school decentralization so that public policy discussions of the issues would not be dominated by ill-informed views and potentially biased mass media presentations. The reader will have to judge what our biases may be, but the intent of the study has been to present a balanced picture of what has happened in the New York City schools under decentralization, acknowledging all its complexities. While public policy decisions on such controversial issues are obviously not made on the basis of "objective studies", we feel that such a study in this instance can add significantly to a deeper understanding of how patterns of governance and management are affecting the schools.

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* See, for example, the series of articles in The New York Times summarizing what some of its education reports concluded had been the results of decentralization.

** The only other attempt to analyze the impacts of school decentralization has been Marilyn Gittell's "New York City School Decentralization; A Retrospective."

Our Research

The study we undertook to examine what has happened under school decentralization has focused on the community school districts as the unit of analysis. Other possible sites would be the individual school level or the central board. While we have done many interviews and field observations in schools and at the central board, the districts seemed the most appropriate focal point. Decentralization, after all, involved a shifting of authority from headquarters to the districts, and while we felt it was important to look at the entire system, any assessment of how decentralization proceeded had to concentrate to some large degree on the main administrative unit that decentralization established. And changes, if at all, in the way schools functioned would, of necessity, be very much affected by the changed structure and operations of the districts under the new decentralization law.

Indeed, that became a central issue of the study, whether or not the districts were functioning in different and more or less productive ways under decentralization and what impacts this might be having on the schools. There are too many districts for us to have undertaken to study all or most of them, though we did gather much information on an many as we could in an earlier, pilot phase of the study. We decided instead to select 8 districts representing a broad cross-section of the city for more intensive study. They have not been indentified by name or location and are referred to in the report only by letter - e.g., District A, B, etc. The important point is that they be identified by their main sociological characteristics. They include two poor Hispanic districts, two poor black ones, two with a mixed student population, both white middle class and poor minority, and two that are predominantly white middle class.

The study entailed in-depth, yet focused interviews in these eight districts, averaging roughly fifty informants per district, plus another fifty with knowledgeable informants from school headquarters, the State Education Department, the teachers' union, academicians, business, and labor people, and the broad spectrum of educational interest groups involved in the district. In addition, the researchers attended many community school board and other district meetings, and reviewed documents and statistical data on district resources, costs, programs, administration, and performance.

The main questions of the study include:

(1) How have different districts chosen to exercise their options under decentralization? In brief, what is the range of styles districts have adopted?

(2) Why have they adopted different management styles?

(3) Does district style or any other aspect of decentralization make a difference in school and district performance?

(4) What lessons can be learned from the experiences of these eight districts that will help in future decisions regarding decentralization?

The original research design involved doing four paired comparisons, with each pair representing roughly the same population. The rationale for the approach was to control for this important population variable, and to have the pairs include districts that our earlier, pilot research suggested seem to reflect different styles. It turned out, however, that the population changes in each of the pairs were too divergent for that design to have much applicability. Instead, we have ended up with eight analytic case studies, each of which reflects some generic issues under decentralization and is therefore of broad, policy relevance.

The study highlights relationships among three sets of variables: (1) the management style of the district; (2) the socio-political and demographic context within which the district functions; and (3) student performance. Ultimately, the test of decentralization must rest on what happens in the classrooms, in terms of whether reading and math scores, attendance, and later academic attainments improve.

That test of decentralization is difficult to make in the New York City situation, as it is in many such social experiments, and for fairly obvious reasons in this case. The main one is that forces other than decentralization affect student performance. Two prominent ones in New York City have been its continued shift in student population throughout the period of decentralization (1970 to the present) and its fiscal crisis and consequent cutbacks. White and minority middle class students have left the public schools in large numbers, while poor minority ones have increased as a proportion of total enrollment. Several districts in our study have undergone such shifts in student population since 1970. If decentralization were in fact having a positive effect on student performance, the best it might do in such districts would be to minimize the extent of decline.

The districts have been hampered in that effort, however, by the city's fiscal cutbacks. Declining resources for the New York City schools have hit the districts very hard since the mid 1970s. The numbers of curriculum coordinators, guidance counsellors, supervisors, administrators, and teachers available to the district have shrunk considerably in recent years, contributing to increased class size and to some degree of disorganization in schools at the start of the year, as the nature and timing of the cuts are not always predictable that far in advance.

For these reasons, among others, one must interpret with caution such data. In addition, an assessment of decentralization benefits from using process as well as bottom line indicators of effectiveness, and there is a well-regarded literature in the social science of organizations that takes this point of view. It makes the point that one may learn a lot more about long-term trends and prospects for organizations by looking at such process indicators than by taking just bottom line ones.* We have thus gathered data relative to them as well, including: (1) the extent of fit or congruence between the schools and community -- for example, in curriculum, orientation, and skills of staff, and linkages of school programs to outside agencies; (2) the extent of success in bringing in state and federal funds for new programs, (3) the extent to which neighborhood stabilization is enhanced through district-initiated desegregation programs, school improvement efforts, and the development of alternative schools; (4) the extent to which job opportunities exist for parents and other community residents as paraprofessionals and neighborhood workers and to professionally licensed staff (teachers, supervisors, district office administrators) of previously unrepresented ethnic groups; and (5) the extent to which schools have emerged under decentralization more as community institutions.

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* See, for example, Rensis Likert, New Patterns of Management, McGraw Hill, 1961.

The central focus of the study is on the management style adopted by various districts, the conditions for its adoption, and its effects on the district's performance. We defined management style for purposes of this study in two ways. One was in terms of how the superintendent behaved in relation to a series of critical tasks and relationships, including: (1) curriculum and instruction; (2) district office-school relations; (3) district office-professional staff relations; (4) district office-community relations; (5) district office-headquarters relations; and (6) the internal structure and workings of the district office itself. There are obviously many other ways of dimensionalizing the management tasks of a superintendent, but we found these to be particularly germane for our study.*

A second approach we used was much more on the orientations of the superintendent, with management style being defined as the broad approaches the superintendent used in dealing with critical tasks and relationships, superseding what was done on any particular one. Here we were concerned with whether the superintendent was more participative or authoritarian, more entrepreneurial or efficient and consolidation-oriented, politically accomodating or adversarial, oriented more toward running the district in a formal bureaucratic manner or as a more informal, organic system, with these orientations transcending any particular management task and usually being transferred from one to the other. We have found both approaches useful in developing behavior profiles of superintendents.*

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* See Appendix A for an explication of how we have broken down each of these six dimensions.

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The management style in a district obviously does not exist in a vacuum, and it is shaped in important ways by what we have called the context. We mean by that a district's demographic characteristics -- e.g., who live there and who goes to public school there; its political characteristics, -- e.g. who are the main interest groups and coalitions and which are the most powerful; and its consequent educational leadership group -- e.g., what constituencies and organizations are presented on the community school board, what kind of superintendent do they select, and how do they define their role and his in running the district.

Thus, while we acknowlege that management style is partly a function of the orientations and skills the manager brings to the situation, our study allows for the fact that it is a function of the situation as well.** What kind of superintendent is appointed to a community school district is directly related to the politics, priorities, and values of the district, as channeled through its board, and if the board does not reflect those considerations in its decision, having selected a different kind of superintendent whose orientations and skills do not fit the situation, he may either change to better adapt to that situation or leave, either voluntarily or otherwise. In addition, he may well have taken the job in the first place because he saw the district was a place where his style was particularly appropriate. These are, at least, some assumptions on which we developed our research design.

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* This holistic approach was formulated over the course of the study, rather than being built into our interview guides in any explicit way.

** See Charles Perrow's discussion of this point in his Organizational Analysis, Wadsworth, Belmont, California, 1970, pp. 5-14. He notes that the structure of the organization and its environment are key factors affecting management style, not just the leadership traits and training of the manager.

Lay vs. Professional Authority - A particularly important issue in our efforts to relate the political context to management style, and one that soon emerged as central to the entire study, has to do with professional vs. lay power. The matter of appropriate role definitions as between school boards and their professional staff, with the former being assumed to have a policy-making role and the latter an administrative one, has always been fraught with ambiguity; and in the case of community school boards and their superintendents in the New York City system, it has taken on added signficance. Some districts, depending on their values and politics and on who gets elected to their board, have that board taking on many administrative as well as policy functions, contributing in some of these districts to much community conflict as well as conflict between the board and its superintendent. Other districts have seen their boards assume almost no active role, either in policy or administration, with the superintendent and the professional staff making policy and running the district. The problem of reaching a balance appropriate for the district (given its values and politics) and functions for improved education has been particularly acute under decentralization. There have been many instances in the New York City system of what the professionals refer

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* This has been thoughtfully reviewed in Charles Bidwell's "The School as a Formal Organization," in James G. March, (ed.), Handbook of Organizations, Rand McNally, 1965, pp. 972-1022.

to as "meddling" boards and at least one of a "rubber stamp" board, and in both cases, problems have results, as the case studies to follow will indicate.

What makes this issue take on particular significance in the New York City community school district system is that decentralization had as one of its main goals that of bringing about more accountability of educators to the clientelles they are supposed to serve and more responsiveness to client concerns. Our research design, linking the socio-political context of districts to the management style of the superintendent, helps in highlighting some of the complexities of this professional vs. lay authority issue. Advocates of community control clearly wanted more lay authority but they also wanted better education as well; and the complex problem of working out what the specific parameters of such lay and professional authority should be remains, after more than 10 years of experience with decentralization. The case studies to follow shed some light on the issue, and the concluding chapters suggest some solutions.

A final comment is in order regarding our measures of student performance and what they mean as reflections of how decentralization went. As we indicated in the above discussion of bottom line vs. process indicators of district effectivness, neither this study nor the decentralization experiement in New York City shoukd stand or all with findings on that. For one thing, the tests have kept changing in New York City, as they have, perhaps for other cities. For another, the administration of the test has been a subject of much controversy. In some schools and districts, there is much more prepping and "teaching to the test" than in others. In some, there have been actual instances where only some students would be given the tests — usually only the most high achieving ones. And then there are the many issues of interpretation, where decentralization may only be seen as one of several factors affecting the results.

The important point is that one must interpret these data, as well as any others of such a statistical nature, in context. As long as one is aware of such contextual factors, such data may be useful in indicating some of the possible impacts of decentralization. Though they are not the main part of the story, we have used data throughout the case studies to follow, providing as much information as possible on the context as we interpret their meaning. For example, some of our districts have not improved their reading scores in line with city-wide trends, but have nevertheless been described in the case studies as having initiated many productive strategies under decentralization. When one takes into account the fact that these districts have had major shifts in student population since decentralization, such interpretations make sense.

The Order of the Chapters

The main body of the report consists of eight analytic case studies of decentralized districts. We use the term analytic, because we did much more than simply describe what happened. Our strategy was to explore the possible linkages between community politics, the educational leadership group that emerged, the management style of the superintendent, and the extent of change, particularly of improvement in educational practices under decentralization, including possible improvement in student performance. Moreover, these case studies all become vehicles for generating hypotheses about the dynamics of such phenomena.

While many hypotheses are generated in the case studies, we found it important to pull them together in as systematic a way as we could. That is done in Chapter 10 in which we present a summary diagram on how the districts fared on each of the main variables of the study and then developed a preliminary model of the pre-requisites for district effectiveness, acknowledging that effectiveness itself has many dimensions.

We end the report in Chapter 11 with a statement of some of the unresolved problems under decentralization and make recommendations for change. Some of the recommendations simply urge public policy makers take a much closer look at particular issues -- for example, on whether functions that have remained centralized might better be decentralized to the district level; while others are much more specific in their focus.

No single study, regardless of how well-conceived and extensive, will answer all the questions that are important on an issue as complex as this. But this one should certainly help clarify many of the issues and indicate which further ones require more study.

Poor, Hispanic: One of the most turbulent and ethnically polarized districts in the city that has begun to stabilize politically over the past few years. The main conflict was between a white, predominantly Jewish population, including teachers and the UFT, and a poor, Hispanic one. Decentralization further escalated an ongoing struggle between these groups for jobs and for power to shape district policies and programs. That struggle contributed to so much turmoil that little coherent education planning or program development was possible until recently. And during this high conflict period (1970-1977), the schools lost what legitimacy they may have had, both within the district and at headquarters.

CSBs, in turn, reflected this politics. A minority-dominated CSB (1970-1973) soon replaced an incumbent superintendent with an activist Hispanic one whose strong commitment to bilingual education, to hiring more Hispanic educators, and to community control met with strong UFT opposition. It organized massive campaigns in subsequent elections that resulted in UFT-dominated CSBs, contributing, in turn, to a continuation of ethnic conflict and polarization. The most recent CSB (elected in 1980) represents for the first time a more balanced group, with a potential to bring about a further de-escalation of the white-Hispanic conflict, thereby providing the social peace necessary for new, educational improvement efforts.

Three of the four superintendents under decentralization have played a significant role, the first being an incumbent who served for only a short time before being replaced. His two successors represented each of the polarized factions, and each further polarized the conflict. The first, a male Hispanic, alienated the UFT and white population with his aggressive strategies of hiring more Hispanics and setting up bilingual programs. The second, a traditional white educator alienated the Hispanics by dismantling his predecessor's programs and firing many of his appointees. The most recent superintendent, a former principal in the district, has maintained relations with all factions and helped stabilize the politics. He has pursued several new curriculum and administrative strategies to upgrade the district, including a restoration of bilingual programs, a standardization of the curriculum, a strong emphasis on reading and basic skills instruction, Pre-K and early grades emphasis, a consolidation and diminution of district office staff, a re-establishment of close relations with HQ, and increased attempts to secure outside (state and federal) funding. His is a stabilizing and balance strategy that may soon lead to orderly ethnic succession. A new moderate coalition of white and minority CSB members may be reinforcing that effort. And the next few years may well see significant improvements in education, flowing from the new political stability.

Our next district is located in a small, rapidly changing area in the city. Its public school population is close to 74% Hispanic, including, in addition, 14% Blacks and 7% Asians, most of them from low income, working class families. These minority parents are in that sense a working poor, rather than being an unemployed, predominantly welfare population. There remain many white residents in the area, however, who have been active in school politics, usually in opposition to community organizations and activists representing or claiming to represent the interests of Hispanics. Indeed, this district has a long history of being one of the most politically polarized and conflict-ridden ones in the city and has been the center of a big power struggle between whites and Hispanics over jobs and over who would be able to shape key district policies and programs. Opponents of decentralization often refer to this district as a prime example of the worst forms of local corruption and patronage. Decentralization advocates, on the other hand, see it as reflecting the power of the teachers' union and traditional educators to maintain the status quo, a power that these advocates maintain must be broken if the schools are to become more responsive to the needs of the city's poor minority populations.

A big part of this district's political conflicts under decentralization resulted from the fact that it was created in a gerrymandered fashion as a small, segregated district, whose students and problems were thereby kept away from the schools immediately to the north. As one of the top district staff recalled: "The district lines were drawn in a way that built a wall and stigma with us as the people that they in the neighboring district didn't want. We felt like lepers. It was a contemptible thing to do, but the politicians did it anyway. It was clear to anybody with any common sense what had been done. They cut off your legs and then call you a cripple, and that is what happened to this district."

Unlike the other minority districts we studied, this one did not settle down politically during the first few years of decentralization. Instead, it has experienced continued turmoil during most of the past decade and has only recently begun to stabilize to a point where the CSB and superintendent could focus on educational program issues instead of just political ones. An analysis of the district's experiences under decentralization may thus highlight both the sources and consequences of political conflict and those of its recent stability, and both trends are perhaps reflected in more dramatic form in this case than in most others.

The district has had the smallest student enrollment of any in the city, both at the start of decentralization and at the present time. Thus, it had 18,411 students in 1970 and only 11,386 in 1980, with at least some of that decline attributable to the political instability, as parents increasingly enrolled their children in parochial and private schools. The geographic area covered by the district is also very small, constituting a limited portion of its borough. Its turbulent ethnic politics, however, have been at least as complex and virulent as those of much larger, more ethnically heterogeneous districts.

There are three separate sets of neighborhoods encompassed within the district. One is composed of mostly white middle class residents, many of them young, single people, including a fair number of artists and writers. For the most part, they have not been involved in public school politics. A second is an Orthodox Jewish area, comprised mainly of elderly residents, many having lived there for several generations. A third is a new Hispanic area, with a much younger population comprised of many families with children attending the public schools. The last two areas are both poor ones, with pockets of middle class people spread throughout the district but concentrated much more in the first area. "The Orthodox Jewish and Hispanic neighborhoods each feel a sense of desparation," reports a journalist who writes about the district and lives there. "Each feels the other will soon become dominant, and this creates a sense of great fear, while the middle class area has much less of this desparation." The fears of the Jewish population are compounded somewhat by the fact that voter registration among Puerto Ricans has increased a lot in recent years.

Meanwhile, the fears of both poor neighborhoods are further increased by what this same informant describes as a signficant gentrification movement in which poor residents are being forced out, with young middle class people moving in and restoring some of the deteriorating housing in those areas. The housing in some of these neighborhoods has deteriorated so much that it has become a target of some arson, further displacing many poor residents.

The educational politics in the district reflect, in turn, this continuing conflict between the two poor neighborhoods. "It is basically a fight between Puerto Rican leaders and the Jews," explains a local resident. "The former want to have a say in local government, while the latter say 'You are not really qualified.' And they use the CSB as a vehicle for patronage and jobs."

There were two broad sets of coalitions, then, that had been vying for power under decentralization. The one representing white educator interests consists of a local Democratic Club; a federation of Jewish community groups; and a front group for both organizations, as well as for many educators and their unions. This is an anti-community control coalition that has its own Brotherhood Slate for every CSB election and that has elected an overwhelming majority each time since 1973. The 1980 election, however, has witnessed a decline of this majority, as we will discuss below.

The UFT and, secondarily, the CSA, are the core of this coalition, since their interests (e.g., jobs) have been the primary concern. They have put considerable amounts of money into campaigning for their candidates and into getting out the vote of an elderly Jewish population by activating that group's ethnic interests and fear of anti-Semitism. As one community control activist reported: "This district has been a bastion for the UFT for a generation. They are ingrown, and many teachers live in the neighborhood. There has been a lot of nepotism over the years. And the issues have been those of power, controls, and jobs. The white Jewish establishment here sees the district as their turf, even though their children don't go to school here. In 1973, the UFT and CSA poured in $130,000 to $140,000 to the election. No expense was spared. Shanker saw the district as another Ocean Hill-Brownsville. And the UFT was not going to let the minorities get any more than the nothing they had. The establishment of a bilingual program was taken as a sign of anti-Semitism. Bilingualism in and of itself was seen as an attack on the Jewish population."

The other coalition, representing Hispanics, included anti-poverty agencies; an organization that grew out of community-based organizing and includes parents, tenant groups, and community control activists; a Puerto Rican political organization that came into acute conflict and quasi-terrorist confrontations with the Jewish Defense League in the early years of decentralization; a community agency that has helped organize parents and promote voter registration; and various other district-based and city-wide organizations, e.g., the Hispanic Central Labor Council, District Council 37 (with its large minority membership, some of whom live in the district and use its schools), the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) that also has an increasing minority membership, and the Community Service Society that has helped in parent training, organizing, and voter registration. The most militant community groups have been largely replaced over the past year with a parent-community slate that has played down ethnic issues and tried to appeal to the largest possible spectrum of groups interested in improving education and ethnic representation in the district. Some of the more moderate of such groups had been alienated in the past by the goals and tactics of the militant factions. Indeed, over the past couple of years, power has shifted from the militant groups of the past to newly organized parent associations, along with teachers and supervisors, all of whom are much better informed about individual schools than either those other groups or the CSB.

History of CSBs and Superintendents - CSBs and superintendents in this district have gone through some radical changes before reaching the political stability that they have over the past few years. At the same time, the district continues to have one of the most ethnically unrepresentative boards of any in the city, as it has maintained throughout decentralization. This has been due to the fact that there, as elsewhere, whites vote in much greater numbers than minorities. It has been reinforced in this district by the electioneering of the UFT and CSA that have poured so much money into getting the elderly, white Jewish population to vote. As one Hispanic activist reported, "The Jewish people that the

UFT gets to vote don't even have children in the district. A lot of those who vote are people the UFT pick up in taxis and limousines and bring them over to the voting places. They even bring them out of old age homes."

Thus, the first CSB began with 6 whites and only 3 minority members. After 2 of the whites were replaced by minority members, changing the entire balance of power, the UFT became active in all subsequent elections, and those efforts had a major impact. There were 5 whites on the 1973 CSB, 6 on the 1977 one, and 8 on the 1980 one, though at least two of the whites on this last board are strongly community rather than teacher-oriented, as we will discuss.

One of the most important developments on the 1970 CSB was the 5-4 majority that soon emerged in favor of the Hispanics, after two white members resigned and were replaced by minority people. The UFT reportedly was not alert enough to these developments to have stopped them and they then resulted in the newly community control oriented board selecting in 1971 an Hispanic male with prior experience in Ocean Hill-Brownsville as its superintendent. This energetic and aggressive superintendent was a strong community control advocate himself, with what one Hispanic CSB member referred to as a "consumerism" outlook, and he made many staff and program changes, appointing up to 10 or 11 Hispanic principals, many Hispanic APs, and over 100 Hispanic teachers. Many of these Hispanic educators were appointed in connection with new bilingual programs, and the UFT and CSA saw this development as a distinct threat to many jobs for white educators. As one attorney working in the district at that time recalled: "This Hispanic superintendent did not fire any white teachers or principals. What he did, though, was to fill vacancies with Hispanics."

The UFT and CSA then got very active politically in the 1973 CSB election, as we have already described, and they were successful in changing the balance of power on the CSB back to one of white, pro-educator domination. The new board coalition then brought a court suit against the superintendent, charging him with discrimination against whites in these appointments, and though he was vindicated of any charges of racism and anti-Semitism, the CSB was able to suspend and finally dismiss him as superintendent. He left at the end of 1974, to be replaced by an equally activist, aggressive and polarizing successor who had been an assistant principal in one of the district's junior high schools. This superintendent was strongly opposed to community control, was an outspoken defender of traditional UFT and CSA interests, and worked assiduously in alliance with his CSB to systematically dismantle all the programs that the prior superintendent had established. He also dismissed most of the Hispanic and black educators that his predecessor had appointed. As one informant related: "After the CSB got rid of the old superintendent, the Board and the new superintendent dismantled all the programs the old one had set up, especially the bilingual ones. The Hispanics and blacks that he had appointed were replaced with whites. It took three years to dismantle what he had accomplished. What they did was discrimination, though nobody calls it that."

From 1973 through 1977, this pro-UFT CSB and superintendent ran the district in a way that was most favorable to teacher and traditional white educator interests and opposed to those of many parents and Hispanic activists. There was a minimum of parent participation, CSB sessions were usually held in secret. And the general policy was one of re-establishing "professionalism" in staffing decisions in opposition to the "patronage" and "ethnic politics" of the earlier period. For this board and superintendent, "professionalism" meant appointing mainly mono-lingual, white teachers and supervisors from civil service lists.

While the 1977 CSB was similar to its predecessor in background and outlook, that year marked a turning point in the district's development. The superintendent was encouraged to resign at the end of the year, which he did, after the CSB realized that there were serious financial irregularities with the district's food programs. As one CSB member explained: "He left rather than being indicted. There was an awful lot of money missing and unaccounted for." This superintendent's polarizing style may have been a factor as well, as it became clear to the CSB that it needed another superintendent who might run the district in a less adversarial manner vis-a-vis the polarized factions (UFT and Hispanic activists).

The superintendent the CSB then selected who has served since January, 1978, was a former principal in the district. He was quite apolitical, unlike his two predecessors, having declined to take the superintendency position several years before, when the politics were so rampant.

That superintendent has helped to stabilize the district, along with his CSB that is no longer involved, as its predecessors were, in the ethnic politics of staff appointments. "In the last three years," reported a top district office staff person, "our CSB has not been into patronage. We are sensitive about appointing more minorities, but they have to be professional." The most recent CSB, for example, represents for the first time a more balanced group in terms of its educational and political priorities, with a potential for bringing about a further de-escalation of the white-Hispanic conflict that had been so rampant before. Even though there is only one Hispanic on this board, several of its white members are sympathetic to Hispanic concerns. One of these white board members, an attorney and Orthodox Jew who had been a most active board president before, has worked much more closely with the Hispanic member to restore bilingual programs and have the CSB much more responsive to Hispanic interests than before.

In brief, the history of this district's CSBs has been one in which Hispanics held the balance of power as the majority coalition for a very short time in the early 1970s, with later boards dominated by the UFT, to protect its job interests. These boards were always factionalized, with the white majority excluding the minority members from its decisions, often meeting in secret and not sharing with them its deliberations, made in alliance with the Grand Street coalition. The most recent board now has 3 white moderates who were elected on the parent-community slate, and they, plus the former CSB president (also white) and the Hispanic member, have been moving the board in a much more productive and less politicized direction than ever before.

Though we have referred in passing to the styles of the various superintendents, it is important to highlight them more as they reflect the volatile politics that the district has experienced under decentralization. The Hispanic superintendent who served from 1971-1975 was one of the most community control-oriented and controversial of any superintendent to ever serve under decentralization. A veteran of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville struggle, he pursued a very aggressive strategy of hiring more Hispanic (and some black) educators, of building up a large bilingual program, and of increasing minority parent participation in schools and district affairs. In addition, he made this district the first in the city to have its own locally-controlled lunch program.

His energetic style in pursuing these strategies in a district that had always been controlled politically by its white population re-activated considerable anxiety and hostility, particularly from the UFT and CSA. The district had a history of confrontation between poor Hispanics and educators, dating back to parent organizing efforts of anti-poverty agencies in the 1960s; and these activities of the superintendent, with the support of anti-poverty agencies and minority parents and educators, rekindled that conflict. CSB meetings were marked by physical confrontation and violence, as militant Hispanic and Jewish groups squared off against one another. "It was a war zone," reported one union official. "Teachers would have to be escorted into the schools by armed guards. The parent associations were taken over by the superintendent's cronies. One principal was literally broken by the PAs." As an Hispanic activist recalled: "There was terrorism on both sides. In all the fighting and bickering, education got lost. There was no room for education anywhere." This district thus became quite polarized, as the superintendent and his supporters pursued a strategy that was aimed at opening up opportunities for minority educators and altering the "power structure" of the district.

The extent of the polarization becomes quite clear as one compares the markedly different accounts of those years of the two sides -- the UFT and the community control activists. From the UFT perspective, the hallmarks of this Hispanic superintendent's administration were his "illegal appointments" of "unqualified" Hispanic educators and district office staff, the blatant racism and anti-Semitism of such appointments, and the erosion of "professionalism" that they involved. Virtually all of his actions were interpreted in that light, as district decisions became increasingly politicized. From the Hispanic and community control perspective, on the other hand, this superintendent's efforts represented a legitimate and, for a time, effective strategy to not only open up opportunities for qualified minority educators, but to increase parent participation in the district and, most important, to significantly improve education.

Consider, in this light, the following two versions of this history:

> This district was used as an instrument to create jobs for Hispanics. We got totally illiterate people that were brought in by the superintendent. Teachers would have to be escorted into the schools by armed guards. Children were being threatened. It was dangerous to be seen with the teachers. Parents that tried to run for the CSB at the time were threatened by the superintendent's people. The PAs were taken over by his cronies. PAs dwindled in numbers, and the only ones left were his henchmen. The regular parents pulled out....The common cry became 'You are white, so what do you understand?' It got to be so that the UFT had to be concerned about the safety of teachers. Rather than education being the main concern, the physical protection of teachers became the main issue....Many of the princpals were selected illegally. It took months to remove some of them. It was not actually the community in the district that was causing the trouble. It was a small group of opportunists who were interested in the money and jobs that decentralization had opened up...This superintendent was demogogic and an anti-Semite. His parental involvement included terrorizing the teachers, threatening and intimidating them. At the time, CSB meetings were dangerous. There were the superintendent's people plus blacks, Puerto Ricans, Trotskyites, communists, Maoists. They would physically threaten anyone who did not agree with them....The superintendent came in, in the name of education, but he was not really interested in education. He and his group were supposedly fighting against racism, but they were racist themselves. They were more interested in creating a spirit of confrontation in the parents against teachers than in trying to help them understand the learning process. It was set up as an antagonist situation.
>
> UFT officials and UFT-oriented CSB members.

> This is a district made up of minority students, but with power concentrated in the white majority. Hispanics had always been very compliant, as a group, to authority. Then in the 1960s, they wanted more of a voice. They began to demand enrichment and bilingual programs. The UFT opposed that, fearful of its teachers' jobs....This new superintendent was hated by many district educators, as he tried to make staff and education changes. The CSB was so vindictive and so hateful, they saw his bilingual program as the personification of community organizing....In 1971, there were no

> minority teachers or principals at all. There were no bilingual programs in a district that had the highest percentage of Hispanic children....This district has 95% white teachers and 95% minority children....What this superintendent did was not fire any white teachers or principals. What he did was fill vacancies with Hispanics....And there were a lot of education and other good programs. We were the first district with our own local lunch program, the first to publish in several languages, and parental involvement was intense. Parents were very supportive of him.... This district has been a bastion for the UFT for a generation. They are ingrown and live in the neighborhood. And there is a lot of nepotism. The assertion of a bilingual program was taken as a sign of anti-Semitism. Bilingualism in and of itself was not an attack on the Jewish population....The superintendent's motivation was making the staff more equitably represent the population of the district. This totally offended the powers. He was accused of being anti-Semitic because he was improving the lot of the minorities. But investigations found no racism or anti-Semitism, and he and the CSB were vindicated. There was an excellent bilingual program here, and a lunch program, and reading scores actually improved during his time.
>
> Community Activists, CSB members, Hispanic leaders.

One can see from this composite of perceptions representing both sides how divided the district was. It had split into two organized camps whose political struggle consumed their energies. And the superintendent, rather than trying to mediate and be responsive to each faction, adopted a community advocacy posture that was at the same time an adversarial one vis-a-vis the powerful UFT and white community groups. As one perceptive Hispanic activist observed: "He refused to make any compromises and did not take a broad perspective. He focused only on one constituency, and he was not the type of person that could halt the feuds in the district. In all the fighting and bickering, education got lost. That is why I felt that he was not the right man for the job. He was too much into polarizing the groups so that nothing was accomplished and much of what he wanted that was right got lost."

The CSB, dominated by UFT-oriented people, suspended and then removed this Hispanic superintendent, but instead of replacing him with somebody who might de-escalate the political conflicts, it appointed a militantly anti-community control educator with a style equally as polarizing as that of his predecessor. And he activated the same kinds of diverse reactions, only now, it was the teachers who praised him and the community people who were critical. From the teacher perspective, this superintendent was a "courageous" leader who did the necessary "dirty work" to fire the "illegal," "unprofessional" minority educators his predecessor had hired and who dismantled the bilingual programs. In fact, this superintendent not only eliminated the old programs but he repeatedly turned away funding for any new ones. One UFT rep even characterized this superintendent as "pulling the district together," though that was not the case at all. Rather, he kept the district in a state of continued polarization by treating minority parents and educators with little consideration. "He was one of the worst things that happened to the schools," reported an Hispanic CSB member. "He was very sarcastic, very insensitive to parents. He ran the district with the CSB in secret, and we never had the whole story on anything. He was 100% behind destroying the bilingual program, saying it was tantamount to the ovens in Germany. He said it was an Hispanic organizing service." "He and the majority on the CSB sent back $280,000 of bilingual education money," reported a moderate white CSB member. "When I asked him why, he said there is nothing to worry about, because all it means are jobs for Puerto Ricans."

In brief, this district had two activist superintendents representing extreme positions, and their polarizing styles kept it in a condition of continued turmoil. Neither had any skill or interest in stabilizing the politics, and their adversarial postures made it difficult to secure the kind of educator-community collaboration and staff continuity necessary to address the pressing educational problems of the district. The Hispanic superintendent at least did initiate many new programs to meet significant educational needs, but he then negated them with his confrontational style.

This stalemated politics might have continued, except for the fact that the white superintendent was forced to resign when CSB members discovered many irregularities in the district's food programs. The superintendent they then selected, a traditional educator with a reputation as one of the district's best principals, had a completely different style from that of his two immediate predecessors. Though not an advocate of community control, having honored the UFT strike of 1968 over that issue, he had a strong interest in cooling off the district's politics. In fact, he had turned down the superintendency several years before, on grounds that the CSB and the district were too polarized politically for any superintendent to be able to manage effectively. His style is a balancing and stabilizing one vis-a-vis the various educator and parent groups in the district. And he had always played that kind of mediating role, even during the community control struggles in the late 1960s. "He narrowed the gap between the strikers and nonstrikers in the 1968 teachers' strike," reported a top district official. He was called upon by all factions, because he had a lot of experience, and his posture throughout has been to work with all sides for the betterment of education in the district." Since he took over the superintendency in 1977, the district has begun to turn its energies away from "no win" political battles between teachers and community control advocates and to focus much more on educational improvement activities. While he is not singlehandedly responsible for the change, his style has certainly contributed, and it is to a consideration of that style that we now turn.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MANAGEMENT STYLE - The most basic characteristic of this superintendent's style is that it is collaborative rather than adversarial. It has resulted in more integration of participants to deal with pressing educational problems, rather than continued fragmentation. This superintendent is primarily a professional educator who has effectively refocused the district's attention from the divisive ideological agendas of past participants, either pro or anti-community control, to educational planning and improvement activity. Indeed, the whole political climate of the district has changed quite radically since he has been in office, and his style has a lot to do with that.

The change is particularly noticeable in the district's shifting power structure. Throughout most of decentralization, the key power groups were as we described above, a white educator coalition bent on maintaining the status quo and a community control group who wanted radical changes in programs, staffing and patterns of governance. Those groups have all but burned themselves out and disappeared from the scene, having been replaced by newly-organized parent associations and educators, with many of the latter having been appointed in recent years. 17 of the district's 18 principals, for example, are new, having been selected since the mid 1970s.

A further reflection of the change relates to bilingual education, one of the most divisive issues in the district until this superintendent took office. Rather than take a strong ideological stand for or against bilingual programs, he has worked on them in a professional manner. Soon after he was appointed, he appointed an Hispanic as bilingual program director, an educator who is a staunch advocate of bilingual education. Since then, the superintendent has made several Hispanic appointments --

as district office staff, teachers, paraprofessionals, and school aides. And he and his director have increased substantially the numbers of proposals put in for bilingual programs, roughly doubled the size of their bilingual staff, and tripled the numbers of students served in the programs.

Most important, this superintendent has pursued a low-keyed but professional approach to issues that has improved both the political climate and educational programs. Indeed, over the past couple of years, he has kept the district on a more even keel than it ever was before, and that is a major accomplishment, given its history.

(1) CURRICULUM STYLE - This superintendent's approach to curriculum has been to consolidate the district's many reimbursable and city funded programs into a single package, rather than deal with education in a piecemeal way, and to set minimal standards that the schools had to follow. He has done so through a district advisory council composed of parents, teachers, principals, CSB members, and district office staff that he set up in 1980. And they have been developing a standarized curriculum for the entire district in reading, writing, and math that is to go into effect in September, 1981. He and his council are using the central board's curriculum guides to develop their standards, and they have also visited several other districts to learn from their experiences with curriculum planning. "I did this," the superintendent explained, "because I felt the need for a more formalized approach to curriculum. We wanted to take the minimum essentials of the central board and convert them to an actual program. I went to the CSB with the plan; and we are now writing the specifics of our curriculum from the Council's recommendations." At the same time, this superintendent, like many others, leaves it up to

individual principals how they reach those standards, in terms of instructional styles and an emphasis on either traditional or open classrooms.

Particular attention has been paid to reading, to pre-Kindergarten programs and the early grades, to getting much more funded program money (state and federal), and to consolidating the district office management of funded programs. The district now has a large pre-K and all-day day care center program, and that did not exist before on any scale. Moreover, bilingual programs have been expanded, as indicated, after several years of inactivity, and the district is much more in compliance with court orders to provide such programs than before.

As in other districts, perhaps the biggest emphasis has been placed on improving reading, and there is much teacher training that has accompanied this effort. Of great significance in reading and other subject areas is the close relationship the superintenent has established with headquarters, quite a unique development, when one considers the adversarial relation that often prevails. The superintendent and his staff have worked very closely with the Office of Funded Programs at central in writing proposals for a program for reading remediation as well as for bilingual education. And central headquarters staff from that office have given the district's office staff some training sessions on proposal writing.

Other changes are also taking place. Title I and PSEN programs, for example, that constitute the bulk of outside funding, no longer involve pulling students out from regular classrooms for separate instruction somewhere else in a school building. The superintendent has ordered that practice discontinued, as he saw the stigma it involved for participating students who were at least implicitly defined by such a procedure (and probably also defined themselves) as failures.

In addition, the superintendent is now establishing an information system indicating what supplies, textbooks, and other curriculum materials are available in each school and in the district offices. This will help in allocating them more efficiently in the future and in a more timely manner.

All of these developments indicate a rational, planning-oriented approach to educational problems that was not possible before, given all the political conflicts. Further confirming evidence of the upward trend comes from the new district office staff that the superintendent has put together. They work well together, in writing proposals and developing new programs, and that again reflects the educational leadership he has exercised.

(2) DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE SCHOOLS - A close, supportive relationship now exists between the district office and the schools, as the superintendent relates well to his former principal colleagues. He visits the schools quite often, and the principals see him as an educational leader who supports their efforts. "He has taken an enormous interest in the schools," reported one principal, "and he visits them often. He really knows what is going on in each school in this district."

At the same time, there is no attempt to mandate or impose any curriculum from the district office. "Principals in individual schools make the educational decisions for their particular schools," a union official reported. "The superintendent would like to introduce district-wide guidelines and is moving in that direction now, but the schools have a lot of room to develop their own programs." The superintendent explained his strategy: "I am now working on standardizing the curriculum, with scope and sequence objectives. But I do not want the district office to be big brother. There is the fear that big brother in the district office will dictate curriculum, and I will not do that."

A quite different perception on these issues prevails among some remaining Hispanic leaders who are understandably embittered at what has happened in this district under decentralization. They retain the community control rhetoric of earlier years, and from their point of view, there is no educational philosophy, there are no standards, and there is no push from the superintendent and his staff for enrichment programs, or basic skills training, and no significant monitoring activity. This perception is very much affected by the district's political history and by the fact that the superintendent is a former principal in the district who has retained his collegial relations with teachers and principals and has not hired Hispanics as principals, APs, or district office staff. It is probably also conditioned by the fact that it takes time to de-escalate the kind of politics that existed in the past, focusing instead on eduation, and then initiating and implementing new programs and approaches takes time.

What we, as outside observers, see as significant beginnings in educational improvement efforts are viewed more skeptically and cynically by people who have lived through this district's struggles. Moreover, they may automatically assume that a traditional white educator with this superintendent's background and professional affiliations will not be in a position to change things, nor is he likely to have the commitment to do so. As one Hispanic leader observed: "This superintendent was the white coalition choice, and that designation just by itself tells me a whole lot, because anybody who is designated by the organizations in that coalition definitely has a job with one overall objective, and that is to cover up the actions of the CSB as well as to keep the district in the state that it's in and to prevent any minorities from getting ahead. In talking about his management style, I would have to say that it is a style that does not have any structure or any standards as far as I can tell. He is loyal to principals, and if they have problems, he will stand by them, and what pronouncement he makes from his office he tries to make as broad and as general as possible. He has been talking about developing standards, but when I see it, I will believe it. And in terms of the relationship between the superintendent's office and the schools, I would say that at the present time there is no structure within the district office to implement some of the things that we're talking about, in terms of monitoring, accountability, and developing programs. Yet, no matter how much I have disagreed with the way the superintendent was hired and with his own particular approach, and my own desire to have him replaced if possible, I feel that at the present time, it is necessary to maintain him as superintendent. He is better than the rigid, old school types of educators."

Another Hispanic leader had a similar perception: "The superintendent is not going to do anything to disrupt the system that they have going there now. He is a UFT-CSA man. They got together. He runs a stop gap program. It is a control parents movement. He believes in maintaining the status quo in the district -- don't rock the boat too much. He was good at putting the lid on. The turmoil has stopped, but the question is what has replaced it? Has he done anything to make education better? I don't think that there has been any real movement toward change."

These perceptions obviously have a reality for the people who hold them, but they must be interpreted in the political context noted above.

Furthermore, those people are no longer a significant force within the district. "We never hear from these Hispanic leaders you mention," reported the superintendent. They don't have any constituency or voice now. The power structure in this district is not the political clubs, or the old white educator coalition, or this Hispanic group, it is the parents."

(3) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF - This superintendent, more than any other the district has had, has maintained close relations with teachers, principals, and district office staff. Many of the latter have been brought in by him since he took office. And the principals are his colleagues who he has worked and been associated with for many years. He not only supports their schools and programs, but he sometimes calls on them informally, almost as a supplemental district office staff, to help him deal with complex issues. One such issue was a big budget deficit he inherited that he had to negotiate about with headquarters. Being new to the position, and not having a district office management group he had worked with before or that had budgetary and accounting skills, he called on several principal colleagues he felt did have such expertise, in addition to knowing a lot about school and district programs. And they worked effectively with him in resolving some of the budgetary problems.

His relations with the UFT have also been cordial. UFT reps are aware of his refusal to cross their picket lines in the 1968 strike over community control, and the behavior of people during that strike has much symbolic significance for the union throughout the city. In addition, the UFT has not had any conflicts with the superintendent over working conditions and assignments, relative to its collective bargaining contract. "With this superintendent," explained one union rep, "the UFT contract is respected. So we can turn our energy to other matters." Another noted: "He is doing a good job. The district is quieter. It is possible to teach again. He is a good educator who is not here to foment a revolution. The educational process is back in this district."

Given the conflicts that existed before his appointment, this superintendent has thus handled the district's constituencies with much skill. Even his predecessor, certainly a strong UFT supporter, was seen as not acting in the union's interests because of his style. "He polarized the district and caused a lot of hatred," explained a union official. "He is a man of strong convictions and opinions who believes in stating them very forcefully," he continued, "and that didn't heal the wounds."

(4) DISTRICT OFFICE AND COMMUNITY - On the matter of parent participation, this superintendent has established better relations between minority parents and white educators. Shortly after he came in, he formed a President's Council of PA heads from each school and got them to meet on a regular basis. "We never had much parent participation before," he said. "There was no President's Council. It had never been encouraged. The previous superintendent (the Hispanic one) only wanted one group of parents to participate. There are now pro and anti (community control) people on that council, sitting at the same table. They are no longer into a battle. And the principals and PAs work together well."

Indeed, as indicated above, the main power group in the district now are parents. They have become organized only in the last couple of years, and their voice is heard more frequently. It is a voice that expresses a concern about improving schools, rather than about issue of power, control, and jobs as was the case before. "There is a real community out there," explained a top district office staff person, "composed of parents. They are smart, and you have to earn their respect. We meet regularly with every PA head, and their concerns are nitty gritty concerns. They want more security in the schools and they want to know when they will get their school painted. These parents are where it is at, and they are not at all interested in posturing and rhetoric. They want better education. We have PA presidents here who put in a lot of their time. There are even some who bring kids back into the schools from the parks where they have been playing hookey. In this district, the parents are the ones who hold the power. Ther are the power structure."

The superintendent was very clear on these points, indicating that parents were his primary constituency. "I don't own these parents," he said. "I have to keep earning my credibility with them by what I do." He has apparently been doing that in recent years, as evidenced by the fact that parents campaigned hard for him in the spring of 1980, when his contract came up for renewal. He had not initiated or even encouraged their campaign, for fear it might stir up the protests and rhetoric of the past. The resulting CSB vote was 9-0 to give him a 3-year contract, and the parents' efforts had obviously helped.

One incident that illustrates how he gained the parents' support related to a headquarters announcement a few years ago of a proposed closing of one of the district's schools. The parents of that school were furious and were ready to demonstrate in protest, with one CSB member all ready to lead the fight. The superintendent visited the parents and asked them to hold off until he met with the Chancellor to explore the issue. He informed the Chancellor that if that school were forced to close, it would open many old wounds, since it was in an Hispanic area where the people would have confirmed for them that the white area schools were the favored ones, since none of them was scheduled for closing. The Chancellor understood the point, and he promised he could not close the school, as long as there was no demonstration, because if there was, he would look like he had caved in to political pressure and would thereby invite much more public protest form other districts. The superintendent then went back to the Hispanic parents and told them the school would not be closed, urging them to call off their demonstration. "They were skeptical," he reported, "but I told them I was putting my position on the line, and they agreed. They and I knew that it was my job if the Chancellor closed the school. He didn't clsoe it, and I won their respect as a result." There were other, similiar incidents, and over time, they built up his credibility even more.

Again, this is not the perception of Hispanic leaders who remain very disappointed at the limited extent to which parents play an active, independent role in the district. "Parent participation is very poor," explained one of them. "The President's Council and the PA network are a sham. They are in close with the Grand Street group, and the district has an active strategy not to involve our parents." "The PAs are a total farce," reported another. "This superintendent is more workable than the one who preceded him. He is more responsive, more presentable, and more competent. But he is not giving minorities more power."

Yet, the Hispanic community is more organized than it was before, as evidenced by its success in electing 3 whites from a parent-community slate. They do form alliances with the Hispanic CSB member in decisions on district policy, and that is a change from the past. "This board is about the best it has ever been," indicated an Hispanic leader. "We never had control except for a brief period in the early 70s."

(5) DISTRICT OFFICE BUREAUCRACY - One of the most significant changes under the present superintendent has been in the organization and staffing of the district office. Through the early years of decentralization, the district office had a very large staff, particularly in funded programs. This superintendent totally reorganized the office, reducing the staff considerably in a period of fiscal cutbacks and consolidating many of the positions and departments. As one district office staff person reported: "We reduced the staff in my unit from 9 to 4. We consolidated PSEN and Title I into one position. There were too many chiefs and not enough was being done before. We consolidated it." As the superintendent explained: "The district office used to be very fragmented. I am consolidating it now. The disorganization of the office was simply a symptom of broader chaos in the district. I am getting the office back on an even keel where we can have some efficiency."

One of the things the superintendent did was to bring in many new people, some from other districts. He involves them with him in many key decisions. And he has people doubling up on tasks where each takes on responsibilities that used to be diffused among many staff people before. This has taken place in several districts, and it has been quite pronounced here.

Conclusions - This district is an example of a once predominantly white Jewish area that had maintained control over the schools and other community agencies for several generations but was being challenged by a new Hispanic population whose numbers were increasing substantially. Many New York City educators live in the district, and decentralization made the schools an arena where heated battles were staged over jobs, control, and community power. Though the white population has declined a lot, now constituting less than a majority of local residents and little more than 5% of the total public school enrollment, it had until recently been highly organized through the coalition we have described, and it has thus far prevented Hispanics from displacing it.

The struggle was so fierce that few, if any, educational decisions could be made without becoming politicized and further activating it. Under such conditions, it became all but impossible to engage in educational planning or to run stable and effective programs. Over the short run, decentralization has clearly exacerbated the conflict, but it was always there, and the issues of minority educators having access to positions and of minority parents having more of a say in school and district decisions would have had to be resolved at some point anyway. Decentralization brought them to a head, and the district went through many troubled years without being able to manage the conflicts. Its two activist superintendents, representing extreme positions and confrontationist styles on either side, contributed to the conflict's perpetuation.

The conflict was exacerbated the most, perhaps, in relation to bilingual programs. These programs were an opporunity for Hispanic educators to get jobs in the district, and they were seen as an immediate and dangerous threat to white, monolingual teachers. Indeed, the rhetoric each side used to describe the bilingual programs indicates the enormous significance they held for both sides. From the perspective of the white teachers, the programs were at best "an Hispanic employment agency" and the characterizations often got much more heated than that, equating them with some of the most virulent forms of anti-Semitism. Hispanics, on the other hand, saw the programs as one of the only ways that their children could be served by the schools and that their educators could gain employment.

Somehow, over the past few years, the conflict has abated, partly because the participants were exhausted by the struggle and partly because of the style of the new superintendent. He has been able to establish a relation of trust with his CSB, with many, though not all of the district's constituencies, and with school headquarters. The conflict has nevertheless taken its toll, as many parents still falsify their address to be able to send their children to schools in a neighborhood district, and as many others send them to private or parochial schools.

Yet, the future prospects of this district are now much more positive. As it has settled down politically, its superintendent and board have begun to focus more on educational programs rather than just political agendas. And there is likely to be a continuation of such efforts that may result in improvements in the quality of education and in student performance. In order for the schools and district to develop more legitimacy so that they can continue in that direction, however, the superintendent and CSB will have to deal soon with the issue of employing more minority educators. For example, in the 1978-79 school year, 85% of the principals were white, with only 10% Hispanic and 5% black, while all of the APs (100%!) were white. Though the district is now in a period of calm, the jobs and minority educator issue is unlilely to disappear; and its future prospects for improving education may well depend on how it handles that sensitive matter.

Indicators of Student and District Performance

This district has been quite stable demographically since decentralization began, as we indicated in the chapter. From 1970 to 1978, its black student population has changed from 15.9% to 14.1% whites have declined from 8.7 to 4.5% and Hispanics have increased from 70.5% to 74.8%. As urban school districts go, and certainly those in New York City, that is a very stable situation. Politically, however, this has been by far one of the most turbulent districts in the city, and it has just begun to settle down in the last few years, since the appointment of the present superintendent in late 1977.

Despite all that political instability, this district improved in its reading scores at every grade from 1971 to 1979. Like the other districts, the largest gains were made in the higher grades which had been farthest behind in 1971. The improvement for each grade level is shown in Table 2.1:

TABLE 2.1

DISTRICT A
Reading Scores for 1971 and 1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change
Two	2.3	2.5	0.2
Three	2.6	3.3	0.7
Four	3.2	4.4	1.2
Five	3.6	5.2	1.6
Six	4.9	6.1	1.2
Seven	5.0	6.4	1.4
Eight	5.8	7.7	1.9
Nine	6.9	8.2	1.3

When we compare the improvement in District A with that shown citywide, we find that it outperformed the city schools as a whole in terms of the size of the gains. The comparisons are shown in Table 2:

TABLE 2.2

Changes in Reading Scores (1971-1979)

Grade	District	Citywide	Difference between District A & All Schools
Two	0.2	- 0 -	0.2
Three	0.7	0.1	0.6
Four	1.2	0.6	0.6
Five	1.6	0.7	0.9
Six	1.2	0.6	0.6
Seven	1.4	1.0	0.4
Eight	1.9	1.1	0.8
Nine	1.3	1.1	0.2

Thus, despite all the political struggles, even the polarizing styles of the first two superintendents and the political conflicts that existed between the teachers and minority group leaders, educational improvements were taking place, the community control oriented Hispanic superintendent had in fact introduced new programs that may have been responsible for many of the gains. In fact, most of the gains were in the period from 1971-75, when he was in office. As the following table indicates, for every grade, the gains were much greater during that period than since then. In 6 of the 8 grades, those gains were more than twice the ones that took place in the more recent period. We would expect that an increasingly upward trend may soon be in evidence in the next few years, as the politics have become stabilized enough for the present superintendent and board to have an impact. They are now much more oriented toward educational improvement activity than their immediate predecessor.

One must not discount, however, the fact of this district's demographic stability. Like all minority districts, it has a high rate of pupil mobility, but it is stable in terms of the types of backgrounds of its students. There are not that many more poor minority students there now than there was before, when decentralization started, and that is probably an important factor in facilitating the improvements in reading scores.

The same general improvement took place in the district's math scores, both in comparison with what they were in 1971 and in relation to the city-wide trend. They went up from 4.4 in 1971 to 5.3 in 1979, narrowing the gap with the city from 1 year to half a year. And for this indicator, much of the improvement has taken place since 1975.

It has taken place, however, with a minimum of initiative on the district's part until very recently in the area of securing outside funding for compensatory, enrichment, and other programs. Indeed, this district was notorious during the period from 1974-1977 for turning back bilingual monies to which it was entitled, for reasons we have already discussed. Those bilingual programs had become so much the center of the district's political conflicts between the UFT and Hispanics that its superintendent and his CSB refused to accept such monies, rather than hire increasing number of bilingual educators that the programs required. And in comparison with all other districts of its type, that is, those with a predominantly poor, Hispanic population, it has generally been the lowest in terms of the amounts of reimbursable funds it received. In fact, many Hispanic educators from this district have sought positions in others over the past several years, where more bilingual programs were in operation.

As for average daily student attendance, it went down considerably from 85.2% in 1971, to 83.5% in 1975, but it then went up to 84.8% in 1979, and there has been a steady upward trend since 1974. The district was well above the city-wide average of 83.6% in 1971. It went below the city-wide figure in 1974 and 75, and it has been slightly above the figure since then. Much of the ethnic confrontation took place during the earlier period when parents sometimes kept their children home, rather than have them face the upset and occasional violence that existed then. Again, we would expect attendance to continue to improve somewhat, as the district has stabilized politically, and as more district resources have been focused on education rather than political battles.

Data for this district are only available for the last three years on its record in placing its graduates in specialized high schools, and they present a mixed picture. In the aggregate, the performance in 1980 is about the same as in 1978, though there are counter-balancing changes for the different high schools. Thus, the number placed in Stuyvesant High School shows a steady downward trend from 20 in 1978 to 3 in 1980, as it does for Music and Art (from 14 to 2) and for the High School of Performing Arts (from 3 to 1). Those admitted to Brooklyn Tech, on the other hand, increased from 35 to 71. Brooklyn Tech has thus emerged for this district as for many others, as the elite high school that has admitted sharply increasing numbers of minority students.

One of the most contested issues in the district, as we have already described, has been the employment of minority educators, and it experienced much larger short term changes than any other district in the city. During the period from 1971-75, there was a dramatic increase in the proportion of Hispanic and black educators, followed by almost equally as marked a decrease over the next couple of years. The overall trend, however, has been one of increasing numbers of minority educators. Thus, in 1971, the district had 4.2% blacks and 4.8% Hispanics in all professional positions; and by 1978, that number had increased to 11.6% for blacks and 14.5% for Hispanics. That trend is also likely to continue, as the district increases its bilingual programs and as power on the CSB gradually shifts to community-oriented members.

One would expect on this basis that vandalism rates would begin to reflect such changes in the backgrounds of district educators, particularly given the fact that this was the issue that raised the most furor. The general picture thus far, has been one of slight improvement. The number of broken glass panes has gone down from 5,300 in 1971 to about 3,000 in 1978. Unlawful entries are up slightly from 66 in 1971, to 69 in 1978; and there were two reported fires in each year, with the number not changing that much in the years in between.

Our general forecast or expectation for this district is that it may well improve on many student and school performance indicators in the future. It is unlikely to change demographically, and it has the political stability to handle its ethnic succession problems without a lot of disruption. It is surprising that the district did as well as it did through its many struggles, and it is likely to do better now that those struggles have abated.

CHAPTER 3: DISTRICT B

Poor Hispanic - Entrepreneurial superintendent who established a climate of innovation and many effective new programs. A formerly low achieving, politically turbulent district whose student performance has improved markedly under decentralization and whose politics have stabilized. Followed a strategy of orchestrating diverse networks of alternative, bilingual, and traditional schools. Established in this sense an intra-district equivalent of a voucher system with competition for students among the different schools. Have also begun to attract white middle class students from outside the district to its schools.

Management style is a loose, matrix approach, with much emphasis on maintaining a non-bureaucratic structure that facilitates the initiation of many new programs. Less emphasis on administration and orderly implementation. A strong superintendent with generally supportive CSBs, except for one interim period.

Our second district is in the residential and cultural center of New York City's Puerto Rican population. Many Puerto Rican cultural institutions are located there, including the famous Museo Del Barrio. Historically, however, several ethnic groups have dominated the area. It was largely German and Irish before the turn of the century. It then experienced a heavy influx of Jews and Italians, and since the 1930s has had a similarly large influx of Puerto Ricans and Blacks. By the late 1960s, it had become a largely Hispanic area (60%), with a significant black population (35%) and some remaining Italian residents. The latter are generally an older population, with the children of the few remaining younger families attending parochial schools.

Since decentralization, many Puerto Rican residents have moved out - some very poor and the others an upwardly mobile, working class. They have moved to the outer boroughs of the city and to the suburbs. They are being replaced, meanwhile, by middle income blacks in new co-operative housing and high rise apartment complexes. Hispanics are still the majority, however, and still hold the balance of power.

The public school enrollment essentially reflects the district's general population, with Hispanics constituting close to 60% and Blacks comprising the rest. Since decentralization, there have been small shifts, with Black increasing (32-36%) and Hispanics decreasing (65-60%), but the basic pattern remains the same.

Enrollment has been declining steadily in this district, as it has in many others, from over 21,000 in 1970 to roughly 13,500 in 1980, making it one of the smaller districts in the city. This has resulted from the big out-migration of Hispanics and from an influx of many middle class Blacks who have few, if any school age children.*

School utilization rates, in turn, reflect these enrollment changes, having declined from 87% in 1970 to 60% in 1979. That has contributed to much pressure from the central board to close some of the district's most underutilized schools. The district has responded, in turn, by locating its alternative and bilingual schools in existing facilities and by attempting to attract outsiders from other districts to these schools. Though the numbers attracted are small, accounting for no more than 200, the fact that even this many would travel from middle class communities to such a poverty area, minority district is quite unusual and reflects on the good reputation and quality of the schools they travel to.**

Political Context of Decentralization - Unlike in many middle class districts, there was strong support for decentralization in this area in the late 1960s. Indeed, some of the leadership of the community control movement came from there and waged their protests against the central bureaucracy in this district's schools. Like many New York City poverty areas, this one was a center of much turmoil that was a carryover from anti-poverty agency politics. Some of the more severe conflicts were between Black and Puerto Rican groups for funds, jobs, services, and administrative control of those programs; and the conflicts carried over the public school politics in ways that made the early years of school decentralization a very chaotic experience. Many CSB meetings in this period were quite stormy, sometimes even escalating into chair throwing and other forms of physical confrontation. In this district, as in so many other inner city poverty areas throughout the country, the federal anti-poverty program had activated community organizing efforts among previously unorganized populations; and the early stages of that process were invariably marked by intense conflicts and leadership struggles.

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*Many are either very young couples or older ones whose children have completed high school.

**See the discussion below on the alternative schools for a further elaboration on this point.

Over time, two developments contributed to a political settling down of this district. One was an informal agreement between Hispanic and Black leaders to divide up the turf, thus providing for some equitable sharing of the new federal resources for the area. The school district lines under decentralization were drawn with this in mind, with one district in the area having a predominantly Black student population and the other an Hispanic one. And the agreement was that each woul dhave a superintendent reflecting the district population, thereby containing the ethnic conflicts. Nevertheless, Black-Hispanic conflicts remained rampant in this district until 1973, when a second development took place.

That development involved the ascendancy to power of an aspiring young, Hispanic politician, who was elected to the new CSB in 1973 and soon became its president. Almost single-handedly, he created a more unified political structure to replace the extreme factionalism that existed before and established some institutionalized ways of handling ethnic conflicts (mostly over patronage).

He did this largely through his positions on the boards of key anti-poverty agencies. Since some members of his board had such jobs through him in these agencies, he had partial leverage over their votes by the obligation they felt toward him on that account. Also, he rarely moved ahead on a policy or program decision until he had informally canvassed his fellow board members, and if there wasn't enough consensus, even after he had played some of his "political chips", he often didn't pursue it.

Most importantly, he helped increase the district's resources, thereby providing enough largess for many of the key participants. For example, he had the district declared a bilingual one, by virtue of its large Hispanic enrollment, and this opened up many teaching and some administrative positions for Hispanics.* So instead of being involved in a series of *zero sum games*, with all participants *competing for a limited pie*, there was *something everybody*, or at least for many more people than before.

The political stability that resulted from these initiatives was to help a lot in establishing a setting within which educational improvements could take place. As this CSB president explained: "When I was elected to the board, we had been a very unstable community, torn apart by racial problems, and with no lines of communication. There was no leadership, no sense of direction, and living from day-to-day. It all stabilized when I took over. I set up a structure."

He followed what he called a *corporate model*, establishing orderly lines of communication between cSB and professional staff. He felt that many educational decisions could only be made by professionals and that too much community and parent participation would hamper the delivery of educational services. He noted: "It has to be run like a business. We can't hold big meetings on every educational decision the superintendent will make and consult the community on every little matter or we'd never get anything done. Parents don't know what it's all about. They are not qualified to know. This is a corporate structure. It is a business to educate kids, and it takes people with training who are qualified."

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*However, many blacks and whites were hired in this district under decentralization as well, and its staff has become one of the most ethnically integrated in the city. We discuss this point later in the chapter.

Perhaps the most important decision of this CSB was its selection in 1973 of a young, dynamic, and entrepreneurial superintendent who was an outstanding educator and soon made many educational innovations in the district. As one of the few Hispanic superintendents under decentralization, he reflected many of the values and aspirations of this community, having grown up and taught there, and having recently run summer programs there.

The CSB president established a consensus on his board that they should delegate considerable authority to this superintendent, rather than get too involved in administrative and education matters; and he got his CSB to give the superintendent almost carte blanche to run the district as he saw fit. There was an understanding that the superintendent would be held accountable for the educational performance of the students, but only on a year-to-year basis, with little CSB interference during the year. As the CSB president reported: "I set up a wall between the CSB and the administration so that the educators would do their job and I mine. I effectively established the shield to prevent tampering and meddling by the board. I never allowed them to be the administrator and evaluator, only the policy-maker. If we have no expertise in education, we should simply select a good administrator and hold him accountable. So I let him be the superintendent and we ran the board." As one parent leader explained: "He (CSB president) was a good facilitator in letting the superintendent run the system, while the board made policy. This was good in that he could try out new programs without having to clear them with the board."

From 1973 on, then, the district moved to a new stage of political development, from the extreme instability, factionalism, and turbulence of the early years under decentralization, to much more stability. Several conditions that seem associated with educational effectiveness also came with this change, including: (1) A consensus on the CSB that its main role was to set policy and not become involved in administration; (2) much delegation of administrative authority to the superintendent and professional staff; (3) a consensus as well between the CSB and superintendent on matters of role definition; and (4) a resultant freeing up of the superintendent's resources for educational improvement activities, rather than for jurisdictional struggles with his board. While these aren't the only conditions for educational effectiveness, they are important, and their existence in this district undoubtedly helped create a climate within which the innovative superintendent could make many improvements in the schools.

The political equilibrium that developed to make such improvements possible, however, was short-term. Even though the CSB president dealt effectively with many constituencies -- establishing a consensus within the CSB for his policies, making peace with the teachers' union that then endorsed his candidacy for CSB in 1975, and supporting an effective superintendent -- there were repercussions from his style that partially undid the structure and coalition he had so skillfully built up.

Many of the CSB president's opponents in the district disliked the unilateral way in which he ran the board. They referred to him as a "power broker" and "dictator." Furthermore, they argued that he had used his position to strengthen his power base and that his actions as CSB president were a calculated means to help him assume higher office. At least three major figures were among this opposition. One was an old-line Democratic machine leader, whose local power base had been substantially eclipsed by the CSB president through the anti-poverty agencies.

Another was *a white Protestant minister*, *the head of a confederation of churches of all faiths*, who had seen his power also wane. He attacked the CSB president for being a community czar with no interest in giving new leaders and grass-roots groups a role in educational decisions. While some minority residents and leaders regarded this minister as a "paternalistic, white liberal," he still had enough of a following to constitute a threat to the CSB president. Finally, *an activist black woman*, who had been a member of the CSB and had a strong power base among para-professionals and Black parents, resulting from her role in anti-poverty agencies also opposed him for many of the same reasons. And she was joined by some Puerto Rican parent leaders who objected as well to his strong, personalized rule. As one such parent leader explained: "Our big thing was to overthrow him, because he had used the district for his own politics."

Thus, despite the president's skilled political leadership, his style undercut him as well. Too many leaders and interest groups felt cut out of the action. They then challenged him in the 1975 elections, and though he won and maintained his majority coalition until he served out his term in 1977, it was clear that his opposition was gaining in strength. Indeed, in the 1977 election, the opposition slate won a majority of the seats, and they immediately set out to change many of his policies.

CSBs: Early and Later - A comparison of this strong president's CSB (1973-77) with the one that succeeded him (1977-80) illuminates many of the political forces that have affected education in this district. The early CSB was much more centralized under his leadership than its successor, notwithstanding a strong faction that opposed his "boss rule." That CSB defined its role much more explicitly than its successor as that of a policy-making body only. It therefore delegated much authority to the superintendent. Furthermore, it maintained an understanding with him as to what were their respective spheres of authority; and their relationship was a very harmonious one, with the CSB giving the superintendent much autonomy to take whatever initiatives he felt were needed to improve education in the district.

One other characteristic of the early CSB was that it used the public schools to further its involvement in local politics. For example, several new Hispanic principals were recruited in part because they were committed to the development of this community. That commitment extended in some cases to a willingness to participate in local elections. And the early CSBs and superintendent actually used the schools as sites to raise money and stage campaign rallies for particular candidates, with the participation of some principals and district office staff. No district educator was ever pressured to support individual candidates, or recruited or evaluated on that basis, but several staff and CSB members were very active in local politics.

The self-style "reform" board elected in 1977 was also deeply political, as are all such bodies, despite its protestations to the contrary. Elected as a "good government", anti-boss group, its slogan was to "get politics out of education." It wanted to promote more "parent and community participation," and to have more accountability of the superintendent and professional staff to the CSB than its members maintained had existed before. In fact, as in most reform movements, it simply substituted its own "politics" for those of the "boss" it replaced.

A hallmark of this new CSB was that it opposed most of the policies that the previous CBS president had established, at times almost as a reflex reaction. An example of that was its continued challenges to the authority of the superintendent, whom several new CSB members perceived as their predecessor's man. More specifically, the new CSB opted for a looser, more participative structure to replace the more centralized one that existed before; and it became deeply involved in many administrative decisions - e.g., staffing, program, and even such routine matters as purchasing.

This board's only identify, however, seemed to be in terms of what it opposed. No strong leaders emerged to guide the board in any coherent direction, and it faltered considerably as a result. In removing the structure the former CSB president had set up, to coalesce various factions and develop some consensus as to policy directions for the district, it removed the glue that had enabled the district to contain conflict. Meanwhile, it put nothing in its place. If a self-declared reform group like this does not have political leadership in its own ranks, skilled in managing interest group conflicts, it cannot establish any clear priorities or function very effectively, and that is what happened in this instance.

The faltering was of such a magnitude that the entire board degenerated into a non-system of nine separate personalities. Even its reform coalition who constituted a majority on the board was itself so divided that is members perceived few common interests, except that they wanted more control over the superintendent. The issue of control for what rarely got addressed. Few of these new members had enough experience, enough of a broad, community interest that transcended their personal ones, or enough political bargaining skills to function effectively as a board.

One result of ther extreme factionalism that developed, sometimes approaching anarchy, was that the board accomplished very little. This was best reflected in its inability to select a staff person, to help coordinate its operations. Despite its need for such a person, particularly since several of its members were inexperienced, it took nine months to reach a consensus on a candidate and then appoint him. He then stayed only a year before resigning, for lack of anything much to do, and his successor held that position for an even shorter time before also leaving.

A basic weakness of this board, replicating what was taking place in other districts, was that it abdicated its policy making function. It became enmeshed instead in administrative operations that were not its role, and it did so without any staff. Most of its members were ill-equipped to perform effectively, either out of inexperience or out of a concern with using the board position mainly for personal gain.*

Thus, throughout it first two years, the board developed few priorities about anything, except to limit the superintendent's powers. Many board members simply identified him with the previous board whose coalition they had displaced, without much seeming assessment of his educational leadership.

Superintendent-CSB Conflicts- Many conflicts existed between this new CSB and the superintendent during its first two years, as he continued to function as he had under the previous board. This successor one wanted, as already indicated, to reverse past practice and thereby establish itself as the main decision making body in the district. The conflict got played out on several issues: (1) the superintendent's style of not consulting extensively with his CSB on administrative decisions (e.g., on budget, programs, and staffing); (2) some of his programs, particularly the network of alternative schools that he had established; and (3) what the CSB increasingly perceived as his "loose" style of management, both within the district office and in its relations with the schools.

The conflict came to a head in the first year of the CBS's term (the 1977-78 school year) over the superintendent's contract renewal. Throughout that year, the CSB kept demanding that he consult much more with them on decisions. The board finally established a policy that all budget decisions, staff appointments, new programs, grant proposals, and other related matters had to be *cleared* with it. The board was not demanding that it actually make these decisions, but it wanted to be informed beforehand, with enough lead time, so that it might have some input.

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* One board member, for example, served mainly to promote his music school, according to his colleagues and district staff.

The superintendent, in turn, had a free-wheeling style that we will describe in greater detail below; and this demand was incompatible with it, particularly as it had worked so well for him before and had been so acceptable to his previous board. His other concerns were that the implementation of needed programs could be delayed by this consultative process, that educational decisions might be questioned on non-educational grounds; and that an administrative climate that had been so conducive in the past to educational improvement efforts could be undermined. In brief, a superintendent whose past success was a result in large part of the style described above was now confronted with a new set of constraints that might well limit his effectiveness. A strong advocate of decentralization, he had taken advantage of the flexibility that it had offered him; and he now saw the policies of this CSB as new constraints that would subvert decentralization's benefits in this district.

An astute administrator, the superintendent listened agreeably to the demands of his CSB, chose not to have any direct confrontations with them, but nevertheless proceeded as he had before. And he had enough past successes and enough political support in the district to risk following that style. He thus disregarded many board requests and continued to present decisions to it too late for it to intervene.

As the year wore on, board members became increasingly angry about what they regarded as the superintendent's disregard of their rights as elected representatives to set policy and review programs. As a board staff person noted:

> The superintendent is managing his board and they don't like it. He is too full of surprises for them to stomach. Some of them are very angry. There is simply not enough communication to them on grants, program directors, the opening of new schools. I admit that our board is crazy, but at least tell them what is going on and structure things for them. Don't give them just one name of somebody you want to appoint and then send it up at the last minute. Give them enough time to be able to work on it themselves and express their preferences. I would say that unless he does something about this, he's going to have a very hard time maintaining his board's trust in the future and continue being effective.

The main way in which this increasing conflict between the superintendent and his board got played out was on his contract, which was subject to renewal in the Spring of 1978. Because of many board members' objections to his non-consultative style, his renewal soon became a highly contested matter on the board. Only a couple of members initially wanted to give him a three-year contract, with others expressing a preference for either a one or two year one. The debate raged on within the board for some weeks before finally getting resolved with his being offered and accepting a 3 year contract.

A key factor in the board's final decision was the strong support the superintendent received from parent groups throughout the district, as they appeared at public meetings to endorse him. It would have been embarrassing for a board elected on a platform of encouraging more parent participation to disregard the many voices in the community that expressed such enthusiasm for his leadership. Moreover, principals, teachers, and district office staff endorsed him strongly as well.

As the superintendent continued his independent style during the 1978-79 school year, his CSB again put increasing pressure on him to consult more with them and to function more as their subordinate. This eventually led in the fall of 1978 to a series of board resolutions designed to take away much of his authority. Thus, a personnel committee of the CSB was empowered to review every staffing decision he made, no matter how minor. And another committee was to review all purchase orders, even the most trivial ones for office supplies. He had pushed his powers to the limit and beyond, it seemed, and a backlash had finally set in.

The net result, however, was quite different. Relying among other things on patience and tenacity, as well as on a perception of the board's inexperience, factionalism, and inability to follow through, he succssfully waited them out. By the end of the academic year (June, 1979), the board's own internal factions and ineptitude got the better of it; and when one of its members used what some of his colleagues regarded as "sneaky" and underhanded" tactics to try to unseat the chairman and get himself elected to that position, several board members, including the chairman who had previously challenged the superintendent, made their peace with him. This atypical turn of events attested both to the superintendent's leadership skills and staying power and to the board's ineptitude.

The other conflicts mentioned above were mere skirmishes, compared with this one. One related to the network of alternative schools that the superintendent had set up. They had become a hallmark of the district, and some of the results of their operations -- in terms of student attendance and scores on reading and math achievement tests -- were quite promising. Some new board members were quite negative about those schools for ostensibly philosophical reasons. They argued that the alternative schools programs were too unstructured and "soft" and that there was a need in poverty area communities like theirs for more traditional curricula and instructional methods. "Back to basics" was their slogan.

In fact, however, there was much more to their objection than this. The alternative schools provided an opportunity, some board members felt, for jobs.

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* Blacks were more concentrated in the alternative schools, in part because the bilingual schools attracted mainly Hispanics.

Moreover, there were many more black students in the alternative schools than in the district-at-large, while a majority of these board members represented Hispanic interests.* At any rate, they made some critical comments about those schools, just after their election, but little resulted from it. The CSB didn't have the staff or time to effectively counter the superintendent's defense of those schools, let alone the parent and community constituency that he and his staff had built up to support them.

The other conflict between the CSB and superintendent dealt with the much more basic issue of his management style. His free-wheeling style was a strength in terms of establishing a climate for innovation and for providing effective leadership for initiating new programs. But it was a potential weakness in terms of those programs' implementation. When the CSB was at the peak of its powers, in the spring of 1979, limiting (for a short while) the superintendent's authority, it was critical of his administration on these grounds. Its members noted the superintendent's limited control over various staff in the district office, the loose coordination of these staff, the absence of any formal structure of authority and reporting relationships, and the limited monitoring of the schools from the district office.

The superintendent was himself well aware of this imbalance in his style and hired a management consultant in late 1978 to help him make improvements. The consultant interviewed the superintendent and his staff at great length, made many extended observations on how he spent his time and presented the superintendent with the following diagnosis: (1) The superintendent was too reactive rather than initiating in dealings with staff and had become overloaded with requests from many people. This was reflected in the long lines of people waiting to see him at his office. He had become, as one district staff person noted, the "godfather" of the district and needed to delegate more. (2) He had a non-directive style that reinforced this pattern and contributed to a lack of coordination in the district office. Roles there were too vaguely defined. people were unsure of how decisions were made. They didn't know who should report to who. And all ended up converging on him. As the district's chief executive, time was his most precious resource, and yet he was not using it to best advantage. (3) He was very creative at innovating and stimulating others to do so as well, but he was less attentive than he might be to planning and establishing objectives, to the details of administration, especially to monitoring and follow up and, in general, to providing district office support to principals and their schools.*

The consultant's prescriptions followed directly from this diagnosis. He recommended that the superintendent manage his time better by delegating more to his district office subordinates; that he develop better planning by establishing a top management group to meet with him on a weekly or bi-weekly basis; that he eventually include principals in such a group; that he streamline the district office by clarifying roles and reporting relationships, encouraging more cooperation ("lateral relations") among staff, and consolidating positions for greater efficiency; that he streamline particular district offices that had grown large and cumbersome; that he train and encourage administrators and supervisors to embark on the same management improvement strategy he was following; and that he put particular emphasis on having the district office give more technical assistance and follow up support to principals.

As was typical of this superintendent, he repsonded to the recommendations with much enthusiasm and little defensiveness. And over the next year, he did make some changes in line with the suggestions. He clearly began to manage the district in a more orderly fashion, and this probably helped him in his dealings with his CSB. For several obvious reasons, not all the recommendations took hold. First, it is very difficult for people to change their style in more than incremental ways. And it may be more worthwhile for managers to build on their strengths than to move in radical new directions. There was also the problem of the managerial skills of his top district office staff. While dedicated to serving him as best they could, they would have needed much administrative training to fill the new roles prescribed for them by the consultant. The district didn't have the resources for that. Second, the consultant left a few months after making the recommendations, and there was the usual lack of institutionalization that often takes place when consultants leave at an early stage of their work. And finally, the uncertainty and turbulence of a community school district like this, notwithstanding its increased political stability relative to the early years of decentralization, called into question some of the recommendations. Thus, an increasing literature in management indicated that organizations in such uncertain environments may do best by adopting just the kind of _matrix form_ that this superintendent did. In fact, the organization of the future is often portrayed as an _adhocracy_, with _loosely structured roles_ and a _flexibility of organization_ such as existed here.*

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* This was mainly in relation to the traditional schools. The alternative and bilingual ones were served by their district office administrators.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

District B is an example of a community school district that has benefited substantially under decentralization, due mainly to its superintendent. The CSB selected in 1973 an _outsider_, "new style" superintendent, in contrast to the _insider_, "career civil service" types that HQ had commonly selected in the past. He had several attributes that distinguished him from pre-decentralization suoerintendents who had served in such poverty areas. He had lived and taught in the district. He had close ties with many community organizations and leaders. He was young, energetic, and entrepreneurial, had many program ideas, and was ready to search out programs and staff from anywhere to improve the schools. He had an irreverence toward the system's bureaucratic procedures and was thereby willing to use the flexibility and powers of a community superintendent under decentralization to the hilt. His style was thus one of removing constraints for those educators pursuing new programs for the district. He followed it with skill and enthusiasm. And he was an articulate, upwardly mobile, Hispanic male who symbolized in many ways the aspirations of his community.

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* Warren G. Bennis, "A Funny Thing on the Way to The Future," _American Psychologist_, 1979, Vol. 25, No. 7, pp 595-608; and Henry Mintzberg, _The Structuring of Organizations_, Prentice-Hall, 1979, ch. 21.

This superintendent thus became the major force for educational improvement in his district. When he arrived in 1973, it had the lowest reading scores of any in the city. After four years, it moved up considerably, and its improvement on such other indicators as the numbers of students placed in specialized high schools and private schools was quite dramatic. Moreover, student performance in some of the innovative programs he initiated also improved.*

Creative entrepreneurship and stretching the authority of the community superintendency to it limits were thus the hallmarks of the superintendent's administration. This took place in several ways: (1) establishing a network of what are now 15 alternative schools, mostly at the junior high level; (2) setting up a further network of bilingual schools, from kindergarten through junior high; (3) developing a district-wide reading program that the Chancellor has selected as one of four exemplary such programs for other districts to follow; (4) securing unprecedented amounts of federal and state funds for new programs;

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* See the discussions below on the alternative schools and student performance for data on these points.

(5) creative non-compliance with Board of Education procedures, through aggressive budgeting and staffing strategies to initiate all these educational improvement activities; and (6) continued efforts at removing bureaucratic constraints to further support the programs.

In brief, this district is a classic example of how it is impossible under decentralization to attain enough local level initiative so that effective new programs may be adopted. The style has been one of exercising as much initiative as the system will allow. As one district staff person noted: "I don't consider any day a success unless I maneuver around 5 or more Board of Education procedures. This indicates to me that I am really accomplishing something. The system as it presently works prevents good things from happening, and the only way to run a good operation is to break these rules. From our point of view, it's a question of what is more important -- the rules or the kids. We have chosen the kids."

Studies of innovation in organizations indicate that different styles and structures are needed at different stages. In the early initiation and adoption state, it is important to have a flexible style such as this superintendent had, bringing in diverse experts and professionals who may contribute new program ideas.* At a later implementation stage, however, one must use a more bureaucratic approach. This involves paying more attention to structure, to administrative details of program management, particularly to monitoring and evaluation, with subsequent program and staff improvements made as the results so indicate.

Many managers have skills in either area, though few are strong in both. In his first several years in the district, the superintendent was stronger in the first than in the second. He excelled in establishing a climate for new programs, in attracting new staff and resources, and in finding ways around traditional bureaucratic procedures to get the programs in place. Though he had an equally strong interest in program results, his commitments and skills at implementation were not as strong as at getting programs started. As indicated above, he has concentrated more on program administration since early 1979, with the help of a management consultant, though the changes have been incremental rather than major.

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* See Gerald Zaltman, Robert Duncan, and Jonny Holbek, Innovations and Organizations, Wiley, 1973, for a further discussion.

The strengths of this superintendent's style, then, were on innovation and entrepreneurship, rather than careful administration. And in that sense, there has been an imbalance or unevenness in his leadership that he has worked on somewhat. One other positive feature of his style that has served him and the district well is his non-confrontational posture in conflict situations. His refusal to get drawn into abrasive confrontations with CSB members and others in the district who question his policies has often prevented controversies or bad feelings from escalating. While studies have highlighted the importance of direct confrontations of different points of view for effective conflict management, rather than sweeping them under the rug, smoothing them over, or forcefully repressing them, this superintendent has been effective in such a political environment by keeping his cool when faced with criticism.* He tended to remain relatively detached, patient, and generally unruffled when he was under strong criticism, for example, from members of his CSB who wanted to limit his authority. Meanwhile, he was constantly active in trying to improve education in the district and to enlarge his political support. Over time, a community recognition of his educational leadership -- resulting from good programs, from his efforts at improving district management, and from his successes at enlarging his political base has enabled him not only to survive but to solidify his position as superintendent. To achieve this in the turbulent politics of this or most other community school districts in New York City was a considerable feat.

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* One of the best studies of conflict resolution in organizations is Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch, Organization and Environment: Managing Differentiation and Integration, Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, 1967.

(1) CURRICULUM STYLE: Contrary to many poverty area districts where parents and community leaders have begun to demand more emphasis on traditional, "back to basics" approaches, however vague and ambiguous that slogan may be, this district has been unusally experimental in its curriculum. Though the superintendent has no single educational philosophy that provides a single direction to curriculum initiatives in the district, he has a strong commitment to alternative programs. Thus, the two biggest programs he has are the district's 15 alternative schools, accounting for roughly 20% of its total enrollment, and its network of bilingual schools, accounting for another 20%. Beyond that, the district has other alternative programs as well, through its vast federal and state funding.

The net result of this experimental approach has been to create a situation of competition among three types of schools -- alternative, bilingual, and traditional.

Though not originally planned this way, moving ahead on such alternatives has established within the district the equivalent of a market situation or intradistrict voucher system where schools compete for students, and where parents have considerably more options than is usually the case. Several district staff have indicated that principals in traditional schools feel particularly threatened by these alternatives, since declining enrollments in their schools as a result of parents exercising these options may lead to staff and budget cuts. Such enrollment declines may also indicate that parents and students don't value the traditional schools as much as they do the alternatives. As one staff person reported: "Principals feel the alternative schools are taking their kids away, and they are jealous. Ultimately, the game is one of numbers and power. They want as many students as possible."

Responding to such competition, several traditional school principals have moved to make their programs more attractive. Some have started mini-schools, while others have developed and publicized various enrichment programs. They have written brochures and have begun to actively advertise their new programs to attract and retain students. The superintendent is in this sense orchestrating a diversity of programs in such a way that all may be enriched in the process. At least this seems to have been one of the alternative schools strategy's unanticipated consequences.

Another significant result of these alternative schools is that they are beginning to attract increasing numbers of white middle class students from outside the district. The schools have received much publicity through the press -- e.g., The New York Times, the Post, New York Magazine, and education journals -- as well as through informal word of mouth throughout the city. And since white middle class parents in New York City have always been reluctant to send their children to large junior high schools, the junior highs being problem schools throughout much of the city, more of these parents are now actually clamoring for admission to the alternative schools of this district. At present they only account for roughly 200 of the 2,000 students enrolled in alternative schools, but even that number is fairly large for such a poverty area minority district, and it has been increasing. What exists as a result of these alternative schools which have become, in essence, unzoned, magnet schools, is a form of reverse open enrollment that has increased ethnic integration. That is taking place in an area of New York City where it would never have been predicted, and it is a direct result of decentralization. As we already indicated, these schools would never have been formed, but for the initiative taken by the superintendent and an extremely able and dedicated former supervisor in the district who, with an equally able associate, have provided strong district office support for the alternative schools.

It is too early to tell whether this influx of white middle class students will be sustained or expanded, but it is clearly one of the most promising developments in New York City under decentralization. There are, however, some political and administrative problems with it. Students who attend these schools from outside must get waivers from their home district, and some districts are reluctant to grant such waivers, requiring parents to bring their case to the central board. Beyond that, the district's indigenous minority leadership wants to ensure that they maintain control over the CSB and district office and not have district lines re-drawn to include more of the areas from which many outsider students may be coming. Also, there are the usual travel and safety problems for incoming students. For the program to be sustained, the district may have to help in providing transportation and some assurance that the incoming students will be reasonably well-protected in travelling to and from the school, a concern in many parts of the city and more so in poor areas.

At any rate, the alternative schools are one of the true showcases of this district. No other district in the city comes close to having so many of its students in such alternative programs. They constitute smaller schools housed within existing ones each with anywhere from 50-200 students, having its own separate organization, school director, staff, and parent council, and reporting directly to the alternative schools administrator in the district office, rather than to the principal. They are in that sense separate and autonomous schools-within-schools, with a program emphasis on individualized learning, a humanistic relation of school staff to students, intensive remediation for underachieving students, out of classroom as well as more traditional learning experiences, and usually focusing on a particular curriculum and/or career emphasis.

Students and staff are in these schools by choice, having opted out of a traditional school within the district or from outside, as indicated. Two types of students predominate: those who are highly motivated and are often high achievers, and very low achievers, some with severe behavior probleme. The main emphasis is on teaching basic skills by focusing the curriculum around a particular theme of great interest to students and on which they already have much expertise and self confidence. Some of these themes include the performing arts, science, mathematics, language arts, and sports.

Each of these alternative schools was started by a teacher, who sought out the superintendent and alternative schools administrator and presented the idea or was instead sought out by one of them. Regardless of which way it went, these schools began in a distinctly bottom up fashion. A teacher had a conception of how to run a good school, was usually already putting it into practice in a particular classroom, and wanted to further develop and implement it in an entire school. The program started with two such schools in 1974, grew to 15 in 1981, and may well continue to grow.

Since the schools have been effective, reflecting in that sense the potential of decentralization, it is important to highlight the ingredients of that strategy's success. They include (1) the superintendent; (2) the district office administrator and his associates; (3) the director and staff in each school; and (4) the parents and students.

The superintendent has been the key to the entire operation. Indeed, these alternative schools are one of the hallmarks of his administration, and they reflect the more productive aspects of his management style. In a few of the early alternative schools, he actively recruited a particular teacher who was already working on a program, while in most of the later ones, the initiative came from the teacher and district administrator. Regardless of how it started, his role was always the same: to provide a receptive climate within which the teacher could further develop and implement the idea, and to ensure that bureaucratic and resource contraints were overcome. As the district administrator of the alternative schooks explained: "None of this would have happened except for the superintendent. And he would more likely not have been here under a centralized system." The teachers who started these schools were even more specific about the superintendent's role. "He called me," explained one, "and asked me if I would like to develop an alternative school in his district. I told him it had to be small, with a handpicked staff, adequate resources, and a free hand for us in curriculum, with parents whose kids were there because they wanted them to be there. He told me he could deal with all those problems and that they were his and not mine. 'You tell me what you want,' he said, 'and I will try to deliver.'" Another director reported: "The superintendent is a genious. He has the unique ability to try new things. He's very supportive of innovations, and of principals and he backs us up all the way. He leaves you alone to run your own program if it's working, and he's never too busy when you call him with a problem."

One of the most supportive things the superintendent did was to appoint a supervisor from the district to a newly-established district office position as administrator of the program. That administrator and his associate have become a major factor over the past several years in the program's success. The administrative support they have provided has included informal meetings with teachers in the early formulation of their ideas for the school; follow up sessions with the superintendent; organizing parent associations at each school; setting up a district-wide network of such groups; providing teacher training and curriculum materials for each school; continued assistance to the schools in securing needed supplies, staff, and additional students; mediating, where necessary, between the school and the principals in the building where it is housed; lobbying for higher salaries for school directors and for independent status for the entire network of alternative schools; publicizing their successes; and constantly mobilizing support for these schools from powerful constituencies within the district and the city-at-large.

In brief, this network was successful in large part because of the strong administrative leadership that its district director and his associates provided. While the superintendent was important, his management style was an extremely delegative one; and it was mainly the district administrator who nurtured and enhanced the program's further development. This involved both routine, administrative decisions and broader program and policy ones. As an example of the former, the alternative schools network that these district staff developed included a continued pooling of supplies and other resources that individual schools would have what they needed, often only a day or two after they had called in the request. As the administrator's associate explained: "The alternative school directors meet monthly, and one of the things we do is talk about their various needs for supplies, etc. If one school needs some books or a projector or whatever, we are often able to get them from another school that has an oversupply. Often, the directors in the schools call each other for such help. They may hear about a school having these things through our meetings. That is what I mean when I describe what we have as a network." The administrator has moved in new policy directions as well, as in his seeking of independent status for the alternative schools and his articulating this intra-district voucher concept.

The success of the program also depends heavily on the teachers. One of the things that stands out about these schools is the almost maniacal dedication of the teachers. Many stay late. They often visit students' homes. They sometimes hold staff meetings on Saturdays, and they do much work over the summer in preparation for the next year. The teachers are there by choice so one should not be surprised by these actions. Nevertheless, their involvement and productivity are impressive. The teachers develop strong ties to one another, to the students, and to the school, and they have sense of ownership about its programs that they have helped develop. These schools are in many respects teacher as well as student centered. As one alternative school director reported: "All the teachers and program staff work out of one room in the basement of this building. They all have their lunch together, they kid together, and it's a very close staff. They have a lot of enthusiasm about the program and the kids. And the kids have really responded to them. They're very free and open with them. It's apparent that the kids really love the staff." Another proudly boasted: "Last year, we had less than 15 days of staff absense among all of them."

What is striking about the relation of teachers to these schools is that they continue to work incredibly long hours, way beyond what is specified in the union contract, and yet, the union supports the schools. "The union rep for the district comes to our school regularly," reported one director, "and she thinks the things going on here are some of the most exciting in the city. I take it that because the teachers who are here are doing things because they want to that the union does not feel the contract is being violated." Another school director explained: "My staff works as though they never heard of the UFT contract. People want to teach here, and they don't think in terms of a 9 to 3 day. They don't complain, because they feel productive and happy. We don't even follow UFT staff procedures. For example, every kid in this school has the home telephone number of their teacher and me."

As for the curriculum in these schools, there is a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills, but it is done through a variety of approaches that build on the students' strengths and areas of self confidencd. The schools that specialize in the performing arts, for example, have developed close relationships with dance and theater groups in the city and have professionals in these fields working with theit students. One of these schools takes a number of week-long tours every year -- to the midwest and south -- during which its students perform. These schools combine both professional training in music and acting and a rigorous academic program where regular subjects are taught in a traditional fashion. One other school whose major curriculum focus is the development of writing skills has its students write their own play and put it on. Still another that has concentrated in science and marine biology has developed close relations with the Bronx High School of Science, using its labs on a weekly basis, as well as with the Bronx Botanical Gardens, and other such institutions.

There is nothing new in many of these programs, but their richness, combined with a dedicated teaching staff and a highly individualized, humanistic approach to students in a small school setting, with much back up administrative support, produces effective schools. Parents are also deeply involved in these schools, and one of their contributions in several instances has been help with fund-raising so that many of these enrichment activities could be continued.

While conclusive evaluation studies don't exist for such programs, either here or elsewhere, the district has contracted with a research organization to assess how the alternative schools have done. And the data suggest significant improvements in student performance. Thus, a report by Community Arts Resources, Inc., of September, 1979, on 6 of the alternative schools concludes that 5 of them now have students performing at or above national norms in reading. As the authors of that study state: "What is of particulal note is that these centers are generating this performance in a school district that in reading achievement traditionally has ranked at or near the bottom in a city that, taken as a whole, ranks well below the national norm in standardized testing."

They further report an increase of 56% of the graduates of these schools being admitted to specialized science high schools (Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant, and Brooklyn Technical) from 1977 to 1979, 1977 being the first year a systematic effort was made to increase the number of graduates accepted to such schools; 81% more being admitted to Music and Art and Performing Arts High Schools; and 113% more being admitted to private schools. The figures were even higher the first year, when comparing 1977 to 1978, with the budget cuts accounting for part of the decline from 1978 to 1979. As the authors report: "The A.E.C. (alternative schools) students comprise 26% of the District's seventh through ninth graders. However, in 1979, that 26% has produced 45% of the District's acceptance from the Science High Schools, 65% of the Private School acceptances, and 74% of the Music & Art and Performing Arts High Schools' acceptances. These percentages clearly reflect a level of success that is high relative to the District taken as a whole."

One simple explanation for these findings is that the better students in the district opted to attend one of these alternative junior highs, rather than attend a traditional one. This would then be a self-selected population in alternative schools that had "creamed" the better students, much as receiving schools under various open enrollment plans had historically creamed the higher achieving minority students who opted for them.

Other data on changes in scores on standardized reading and math achievement tests in 1975 and again in 1978 indicate substantial improvements among students in the three alternative junior high schools that have been in existence that long. Thus, the mean reading score went up 3.3 grade levels in one of the alternative schools and 2.7 in the other two, compared with 2.2 for the entire district and 2.1 for the city at large. And mean math scores went up 2.0, 2.1, and 2.5 for these three schools during that period. While problems of interpreting these data are enormously complex, given changes in the test and their many reliability and validity problems, the findings gibe with qualitative data on these schools. Those data indicate that the schools have helped many East Harlem youth to become high achievers and go on to successful academic careers in the city's specialized, elite high schools and in private schools. Many of these students return to the district, reporting on their later successes, and expressing much satisfaction at the education they received there.

As one of the alternative school administrators reported: "By and large, our kids do very well after they leave. Many go to specialized high schools and private schools. They would never have done this well had they gone to a regular junior high. They would never have gone to these private schools, or Art and Design, or Music and Art. They would not have been recognized here for their potential, because they would not have made it into an SP (advanced) class in one or our traditional schools. These kids are in an energetic period of early adolescence and many would have turned to social interests, instead of having all that energy channeled as well into academic work. The ability of our teachers to pick up on these kids is not possible in the reguular junior highs. It is hard to quantify that, but that is our experience."

As for why these schools have been so successful, in addition to the fact that they have high achieving students to begin with, this administrator further reported: "These alternative schools benefited from the beginning from the support and positive climate that the superintendent created. They were started in a bottom up way by teachers, not just an administrative decision. The staff are there by choice, and they care deeply about the kids. The students and parents are also there by choice. They want to be there, and school is not anything that involves coercion. Also, there is a more personal and caring relation of staff and kids than in most traditional schools, partly because these schools are smaller."

These schools have had their problems, however, as one might expect, and the main one relates to their being housed within traditional schools. They are usually given an upper floor or some similarly small and sequestered area and have faced the usual strains of having to share space and facilities with the traditional school. In the early years of some of these alternative schools, the conflicts were sometimes acute, and they still exist in many cases. An underlying source of the conflict, with the space issue being only symptomatic of deeper problems, is the threat that the alternative schools pose of drawing away students. Some principals are quite jealous and resent having both to house these alternative schools and have those schools attract away students. As one alternative school director explained: "Relations with the principal in the building are a problem in all alternative schools. We each try to control as much space as possible. The principals feel we are taking their kids away, and they are jealous." Anther explained: "The principal feels it is his building. He can bother you on petty things, like sharing secretaries, scheduling of the lunchroom and gym, where to put misbehaving kids, and sharing the auditorium for performances." A district office staff person explained: "Having to share the same house is a problem. What does a principal of a regular school get out of it? He gives up control, and the school may take away some of his students."

The other side of the coin in relation to the competition and jealousy, however, is that the presence of the alternative schools has motivated principals in traditional schools to improve their programs. "We see the presence of the alternative schools as making them do many positive things they might not otherwise have done," reported one alternative school director. "They want as many students as possible."

One other problem of the alternative schools has been the limited status and salary of their directors. While directors have all the responsibilities of principals as the educational leaders of their schools, their salaries do not reflect that, since they remain on teacher budget lines. The alternative schools office has been trying for many years to change that, but it has not yet been successful. The principals' association has prevailed each time the issue has been taken up."

Traditional school educators in the district regard the alternative schools as receiving favored treatment from the district office, and this further fans their resentment. They see the alternative schools as getting more supplies and equipment -- e.e.g, for science laboratories, audio-visual aides, books, etc. They also see these schools as creaming the best students -- with the combination of good students and extra resources being among the main reasons why their reading scores are better. On balance, these are myths rather than accurate perceptions, and they are be understood in light of the keen competition between the alternative and traditional schools.

Bilingual schools are another important alternative program in the district. Since the area is such a center of Puerto Rican culture, the bilingual program there takes on particular significance. As indicated earlier, when the president

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* The same problem has existed for New York City's alternative high schools Their directors, as well, are former teachers who were never given a principal's license or paid a principal's salary.

of the CSB took on that position in 1973, and when he and his CSB selected the new superintendent, the board and the superintendent then selected several Hispanics as principals. Moreover, they then got the district designated as a bilingual one, and they set up an extensive network of bilingual centers throughout the district. They now have a well developed K-9 program, with 8 bilingual centers in elementary schools and two bilingual junior high schools. The entire program accounts for up to 20% of the district enrollment. The program has considerable federal funding through Title VII of the elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and through the PSEN (Pupils with Special Education Needs) state monies. It has, in addition, much teacher training, some of it in collaboration with Hunter College, that has a bilingual staff development program.

(2) DISTRICT OFFICE BUREAUCRACY- As indicated in the earlier discussion, this is a district that has been run in a flexible, non-bureaucratic fashion. Planning procedures, job definitions, and reporting relationships have not been formalized to any significant degree, and while the superintendent's management consultant recommended that he move in that direction, it has not been his style to do so. He did make some changes along those lines for a short time, but they were generally incompatible with his mode of operation.

One may view his loose, management style as a great strength, but also as a weakness. And it seems to be both. On the positive side, some extraordinarily productive new programs were begun under the superintendent's leadership, many able teachers, program directors, and proposal writers were brought in, the district raised a lot of outside funds, and the results in terms of student performance have made this one of the most effective minority districts in the city. The Chancellor's Office, for example, has cited many of its schools and programs as among the most exemplary in the system. The weakness of the style is that the district has not been as tightly managed as it might be, and we have already reviewed the dimensions of that problem and the kinds of improvements that might help.

An ideal approach might well involve a mix between the informal, non-bureaucratic climate that the superintendent maintained so effectively, to facilitate innovative programming, and a more formalized structure that would support better planning, program monitoring, and management efficiency. Maintaining such a balance is no easy task, since the two approaches seem so antithetical. It would probably be an unproductive strategy, for example, to tighten up administration if it detracted in any way from the climate for innovation that the superintendent has maintained so effectively. On the other hand, as well as the district has done, it might do even better by developing more of a balance between these approaches. Otherwise, the creative programming and new resources will not be used as well as they might be.

The trick in maintaining such a balance is to somehow insulate each approach from the negative effects of the other. Thus, a concern for orderly administration should not constrain the creativity and dedication of staff. By the same token, however, establishing an informal, supportive climate for developing new programs should not preclude an equally strong commitment to planning, monitoring, and follow up, and an attention to the administrative details of implementation.*

(3) DISTRICT OFFICE AND SCHOOLS- One of the administrative functions that might well be improved has to do with the amount of monitoring and technical assistance from the district office. With the exception of the alternative and bilingual networks, there has not been that active a relationship between the district office and the schools for most of the present superintendent's period

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* Zaltman, Duncan, and Holbek, Op.Cit., pp, 134-55, for a discussion of how to combine the two approaches.

of service.* And yet the traditional schools to which they apply still constitute up to 60% of the district's enrollment. This seems to reflect the superintendent's "laisser faire" style, interspersed with occasional (and sometimes sudden) impositions by the district office of new reading and math programs. The latter programs sometimes came just before the opening of schools in September, with little prior participation by principals and teachers and little advance notice. That non-participative, crisis management style alienated some district educators who already had other grievances -- e.g., that jobs in reimbursable and other new programs were not posted, and that the superintendent did not visit their schools on a regular basis.

In brief, the superintendent seems to have a limited presence in many schools. Even staff in the alternative schools reported this, though without any particular concern, for reasons just stated. Those in the traditional schools, however, did express resentment. For them it indicated further how "left out" they were from district decisions. First, they felt put upon by the fact that district office jobs had been established and filled without their being considered. Then, they found that these new programs attracted away some of their students. And they also felt that the district office coordinators were not always sensitive to their particular needs. In fact, they perceived the coordinators as distant and removed from their schools. These were feelings shared by principals and teachers in traditional schools, many of whom were long-tenured insiders in the district, in contrast to the alternative and bilingual staff whom they regarded as outsiders. While the competition between the traditional and new schools is highly desirable, the district would probably benefit if the former were given much more of a sense that they were equally as important as the latter.

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* The alternative and bilingual schools are well served by their district office administrators.

There was much school level autonomy, then, in the district, but it did not lead in traditional schools to strong feelings of satisfaction and loyalty to the district or to feeling a part of it. Indeed, teachers from these schools, through their union reps, often urged the superintendent to visit the schools more often to improve staff morale. And principals from there felt left out of the district's planning, and have demanded in recent years that they be included. The superintendent established a policy planning council in 1980 that included principals as well as district office staff, as a first step in rectifying these problems. Several months before, he had set up such a council composed exclusively of top district office staff. For the principals, this only repeated what they had complained about so much in the past -- a pattern of closed, top down planning by a district office that was out of touch with the problems of local schools.

Much more monitoring and technical assistance from the district office and much more participation from the schools in district planning thus seem required for enhanced effectiveness. This might well give the traditional schools the sense that they were also an important part of the district, and it might reduce some of the resistance their educators have consistently shown to the further development of the alternative and bilingual schools.* In that sense, it might help curb some of the political in-fighting that exists and establish more of a sense of identification with the district among a larger segment of its school staff.

(4) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF- Any district that develops as many new programs and engages in as many departures from traditional staffing and budgeting procedures as this one did is bound to experience some negative

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* Several traditional school principals, for example, expressed strong objections to a proposal to give independent status to the alternative schools.

reactions from its professional staff and their unions. While that took place here, there was much less of such reactions than one might expect. New Hispacic and black principals were appointed in over half of the district's schools, many staff were brought in "off the lists," on certificates of competency and per diem and consulting lines, and yet no big campaign was initiated by either the UFT or CST in opposition to this. Indeed, the first union rep has such a close relationship with the CSB president and superintendent that he made no objections to these staffing practices. He was, however, voted out of office and replaced by a person who took a stronger stand on that issue. And she kept after the superintendent to post all jobs in new programs and to appoint qualified staff from within the district wherever possible. Nevertheless, she also maintained good relations with the superintendent.

Despite the conflict between the superintendent and old-line teachers over staff appointments, then, there was never any UFT revolt over the way the district was run. The superintendent's non-confrontational style and willingness to listen certainly helped in that regard. And he never picked battles with the union. Relations were so good that the union even supported the CSB president when he ran for re-election in 1975. In general, given his laisser faire style in relations with the professionals, the superintendent left the teachers alone.

The district's relations with the CSA, however, were another matter. In the early years of decentralization, several white principals were encouraged to take early retirement or were transferred out of their schools, often to be replaced by minority successors. One waged a vigorous protest through the media. He was allowed to collect his salary and sit in the district office for several years, to qualify for his pension. He and the CSA gave many interviews to the press and TV reporters in which they accused the superintendent of unwarranted ethnic politics in his selection and firing of staff. Mike Wallace, for example, once conducted a long interview with this principal in the district office, in which the principal explained how his main daily activities were reading the New York Times, doing the crossword puzzle, and putting dimes in a parking meter downstairs. This principal and others were unfortunately caught in an ethnic succession situation. Many had been competent "traditional" principals under the old system, but were unable to function as well under decentralization.

Over time, however, even that conflict with the principals' association settled dowb. And as more minority principals have been appointed, the CSA has begun to reflect their interest more. Indeed, minority principals in this didtrict have taken over control of the CSA and their district rep in 1980 was a new Hispanic principal who was appointed under decentralization and was one of the district's strong supporters.

Thus, while the relationship between the superintendent and the UFT and CSA may not have been quite as close at times as it has been in some white middle class districts, it has not been a confrontational one and has certainly not hampered the district's effectiveness. An important point in this regard is that the district has never intended to move toward an all-minority staff but has pressed instead for one that is more ethnically balanced and integrated than before. Thus, in 1971, 20 of the district's 22 principals (91%) were white, 2 (9%) were black, and there were no Hispanics, despite this being a predominantly Hispanic district. In 1979, by contrast, there were still 11 white principals out of 24 (45.8%) but there were, in addition, 9 Hispanics (32.5%), and 4 blacks (16.7%). And this pattern extended to all professional staff within the district. The percentages for the total staff thus changed from 81.4 white, 5.1 Hispanic, and 13.4 black in 1979 to 45.5 white, 27.1

Hispanic, and 2.6. black in 1979.

Furthermore, there are other minority districts and some predominantly white ones in the outer boroughs where ethnic integration has not been pursued in staffing. Instead, these districts have appointed people mainly from the single ethnic group that was predominant there. The U.S. Office of Civil Rights has forced them in recent years to reverse these policies have a better integrated staff. But that pressure was not necessary for this poor Hispanic district that had already pursued an active policy of ethnic integration and had brought in many new white and black educators, in addition to Hispanics.

One factor contributing to the district's good working relations with the UFT and CSA, then, may well have been those organizations' awareness of its ethnic integration policies. It was hard to pick a fight with a district that hired educators from all the main ethnic groups and whose appointments of minority staff were of pedagogues of long standing in the system who had passed all the necessary examinations. The district has also acknowledged "mistakes" in the appointment of minority educators and taken appropriate actions, just as it did in staffing decisions on whites. All these policies have helped establish a climate within which the district's relations with the professionals were ones of collaboration and trust.

(5) DISTRICT OFFICE AND COMMUNITY- The superintendent and some of his professional staff have very deep roots in this community and are strongly committed to its economic and political development. This has been reflected in their involvement in anti-poverty and other community agencies and in the district's electoral politics. Indeed, one of the superintendent's deputies ran in 1979 for the State Assembly while still serving as deputy, with the district staff's strong support. From the superintendent's perspective, this was a positive sign, indicating how deeply involved the district's educators

were in the community.

On a more educational note, the superintendent has been working with central Board of Education staff to convert an existing high school in the district into a bilingual community high school whose curriculum would be closely integrated into that of the district's elementary and junior high schools. This project is now in the advanced planning stage and may well come to fruition in the next couple of years, thereby establishing a K-14 educational program. And again, it indicates the strong community development orientation of the superintendent and his staff.

Community institutions are also widely used in educational programs, as this district has put a strong emphasis on out-of-classroom learning experiences. These programs involve the city as community, however, as large numbers of students are exposed to enriching experiences in many institutions throughout the city.

As for the district's relation to the community in the sense of parent participation in school decisions, the same general pattern exists here as in every other minority district we have seen -- namely, that there isn't a lot pf parent participation. In the early years of decentralization, the CSB president and superintendent ran the district and the former had little interest in having much parent input into district decisions. Moreover, he was a local power broker whose political base was in the anti-poverty agencies of the district, not in parent groups. His conception of the community was in terms of enhancing his and the district's power base through decentralization, and parents didn't figure prominently in that strategy, except as they might vote in large numbers for CSB members and political candidates of his choice.

The superintendent, on the other hand, has been more parent oriented. He responds readily to parent complaints and concerns, never puts up any "professional walls" to keep them away, and has had good relations with the parent representatives of his CSB. When his contract renewal came due in 1979, he was then able to count on very vocal parent support in the face of a divided board, some of whose members were oppressed to giving him more than a one or two year contract at best.

On balance, however, the superintendent has run the district with a minimum of parent participation, in large part because very few parents have been at all involved in local schools. There was no active President's Council in the district, and only a small group of parent activists have been active at the school level. Hispanic parents throughout the city have been relatively inactive in school matters under decentralization, with the exception of those trained by community action and anti-poverty agencies, and this district follows that pattern.*

There is one such group in this district whose leader, a black woman, had been active in anti-poverty agencies in the 1960s, and who continued her strong involvement in the 70s by focusing on the public schools. She had been informally in charge of recruiting parents for paraprofessional jobs in the schools and has trained many parents to evaluate school staff and programs and express their voice in district decisions. Hers was a small group, however, though they have been quite vocal and at times influential.

The key educational decisions in this district have thus been those of the superintendent and his professional staff, without much, if any, parent involvement. They clearly express the "general will" of the community, in the sense that mamy effective new programs and staff, as well as considerable additional resources have been brought in to the schools.

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* One notable exception is the United Bronx Parents which has trained many Hispanic parents in various South Bronx districts. They have been a significant force in electing CSB members, in the selection of principals and in the development and actual running of educational programs.

Over the past couple of years, a parent support structure has begun to develop, mainly to protect particular programs in a period of contining fiscal cutbacks. Thus, there are active parent groups supporting the alternative and bilingual schools, and they stand ready to defend their schools, if necessary. The professional staff within the district have played an important role in activating these parents.

Meanwhile, the superintendent formed a parents' council in 1980, and parents are now on district-wide CSB committees. In addition, he maintains informal, personal relations with parent leaders, to compensate in part for the lack of established parent organizations in the district. He is always responsive to parent complaints. "We never use the power of our professionalism," he explained, "to keep parents out."

One lesson from this and other minority districts, however, is that parents do not necessarily have to participate actively in school decision making for decentralization to be a success. "It may be a cop out to say that there must be massive parent participation to have an effective district," reported a district staff person. "That may be too much of a burden on minority parents." Indeed, this is a district that has been effective under a pattern of administrative rather than political decentralization. The superintendent has developed programs almost exclusively through its professional staff, with little, if any, parent participation. While that does not gibe with the hopes of fervent community control advocates, it has worked well in this district, as in several others.

Conclusions

As community school districts go, and particularly poverty area districts, this one has accomplished a lot under decentralization. Starting as a district in great turmoil, and with one of the lowest educational performances in the city, it proceeds to become much more stable politically and to embark on many new educational programs. These efforts were largely the result of the district's having selected a "new style", entrepreneurial superintendent who has emerged as one of the most effective of that genre that decentralization has produced. The district-wide array of alternative and bilingual schools, its many reimbursable programs, its ability to bring in many new staff -- as curriculum coordinators, proposal writers, program directors, administrators and teachers -- and its continued success in securing much outside funding all attest to his leadership. There is no question but that he has increased in some considerable degree the resources of this district under decentralization.

Increased inputs may not always lead to improved outputs, however, and the true test of decentralization and a superintendent's leadership is whether they result in improved student performance. As we will indicate in the next section, student performance in this district improved a lot since 1973, when the superintendent arrived. The CSB's role in those improvements was mainly in its having hired the superintendent, its continued renewing of his contract, and its willingness to let him run the district with minimal board interference -- with the exception of the one interim period (1977-79) in which a new reform board limited his autonomy. Even then, however, he carried on, despite the board's opposition to his style.

A basic question of our study is whether the improvement we have documented as having taken place under decentralization might well have take place anyway. Are they in fact attributable to decentralization and to a superintendent that decentralization spawned? The argument of this chapter is that they are and that they would probably not have taken place under the old, centralized system. There were always creative principals who ran effective schools under the old system --

finding ways around the bureaucracy and somehow coming up with the resources needed to run their schools well. But they were individual principals and schools, scattered throughout the system. This district has much more than that. It has networks of such schools (alternative, bilingual), organized on a more systematic basis, where the school director does not have to take on the burden that creative principals had under the old system of "fighting the bureaucracy" and of frantically searching for more resources to run the school. Those responsibilities have been taken over in this district by the superintendent and district office staff. Moreover, under the old system, such creative principals emerged despite an oppressive administrative climate in which there was minimal encouragement for their activities. In this district, the superintendent has created a climate in which such creative efforts could flourish, and he has brought in people from outside who have already demonstrated their talents in that direction.

The new program this superintendent instituted required what limited flexibilities the districts had under the law, plus the many subtle actions he and his staff took to go even beyond those flexibilities. In the past, no superintendent had undertaken such risks, and its seems unlikely that they would, were the system to become re-centralized.

Indicators of Student and District Performance

Given the many positive developments in this district under decentralization, have they made any difference in how well students perform? Have the district's many successes in securing outside funding led to better results in the classroom? We have already reported on the reading score improvements in the alternative schools, but how about the district as a whole? What has happened there?

It appears that the district's educational programs described in this chapter have had an effect. In all nine grades, pupils improved their reading scores between 1971 and 1979, with the greatest gains occurring in the higher grades, possibly because they were furthest behind in 1971, but possibly also because that is where the alternative schools have concentrated the most. The reading scores and the net change for this district are shown in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1

DISTRICT B
Reading Scores for 1971 and 1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change (-)
Two	2.3	2.6	0.3
Three	2.7	3.2	0.5
Four	3.2	4.2	1.0
Five	3.7	5.0	1.3
Six	5.0	5.8	0.8
Seven	4.8	6.3	1.5
Eight	5.5	7.4	1.9
Nine	6.2	7.7	1.5

Most important, the district's gains were greater than those made city-wide. Table 4 compares the two, indicating that at every grade level, this district outperformed the city as a whole.

TABLE 3.2

Changes in Reading Scores

Grade	District B	Citywide	Difference between District B & Citywide (-)
Two	2.3	- 0 -	2.3
Three	0.5	0.1	0.4
Four	1.0	0.6	0.4
Five	1.3	0.7	0.6
Six	0.8	0.6	0.2
Seven	1.5	1.0	0.5
Eight	1.9	1.1	0.8
Nine	1.5	1.1	0.4

What other explanations, besides the special form of decentralizaton that took place in District B, could account for the fact that it did better than the city as a whole? One possible explanation might be selective migrations patterns, but this district has been subjected to the same migration trends as the rest of the city, with upwardly mobile families leaving the district or sending their children to private and parochial schools. A second explanation relates to an artifact in such time series data known as the regression effect. That is, extreme scores (above or below the mean) tend to regress toward the mean, just as a matter of chance. This alternative explanation might be plausible if our conclusion was based only on a change or a difference from one year to the next. But our conclusion that District B outperformed the city as a whole is based on observing a slow growth over an eight year period. It is not based on one year's change.

How then does one account for the better performance in District B compared to the city as a whole? We would suggest that the many initiatives pursued by this district's superintendent, reflecting his management style, may well have contributed. The district has had an extraordinary record for example, in securing outside funding, and that was a result of the superintendent's leadership that we described earlier. He hired some able proposal writers, and they were successful in getting their programs funded. Thus, the district brought in more than $10 million in outside funds in 1978, ranking it as the 4th highest in the city. While some of this was in non-competitive grants, due to the district having a large proportion of low achieving, minority students, including many Hispanic ones, the district has secured substantial funding through the competitive ESA and other programs as well. These successes seem to have paid off in student performance. What is particularly striking is that this is one of the smallest districts in the city in total enrollment, having gone down from 21,379 in 1970, to around 13,000 in 1979. Indeed, in the 1977-78 year, over 40% of its total budget came from reimbursable funds, far surpassing 30 of the 31 other districts.

By contast to the district's reading scores, there has been only a very small narrowing of the gap in its math scores relative to city-wide trends. Math test data are only available for 5th graders, the other grades not being tested, and in this district, the average score has moved up from a little above 4th grade level to 5th during the period from 1971-79. Meanwhile, the city-wide trend has been from 5.4 to 5.9. There has been greater improvement than for the city as a whole, but it has not been as dramatic as in reading.

Attendance data, however, do show a significant upward trend. In 1973, when the present superintendent took over, the district's average daily attendance was 83.3%, below the city-wide figure of 85.6. By 1979, the district had gone up to almost 87%, while the city-wide rate was around 85%. Again, some of this improvement may well have been the result of the new programs the superintendent and his staff initiated.

Another indicator of district and student performance relates to the rate of placement of its graduates into the city's elit, specialized high schools. New York City has five such high schools to which students are admitted only after passing an entrance examination. After a big controversy in the 1960s, in which minority group leaders charged that these schools were too elitist and should be closed down, admissions requirements were modified to let in more minority students, but the standards have not changed much since then. And some minority districts apparently do much better than others in placing their students in these schools. A district's location affect such placement rate, but its programs may also play an important role.*

District B has a particularly impressive record in this regard. Thus, it placed 59 students in these schools in 1975-76, the first year in which data were collected, while that number increased to 180 in 1980. It placed 16 students in the High School of Music and Art in 1975, and 41 in 1980, while the number gaining admission to theHigh School of Performing Arts increased from 5 to 12 during that period. Both increases were probably reflecting the district's vastly enriched science programs. Its tutorial programs with Bronx High School of Science in which East Harlem students visited that school on a regular basis were particularly important in those admissions. If one adds to this the many students from this district who have gone on to academic private schools, the figures are even more impressive.

District B is thus a prototype of a district that did well under decentralization. Its politics stabilized relatively early, its CSB selected a "new style", community oriented superintendent who brought in many new staff, much outside money, and many new programs, and all those positive developments have been reflected in student performance.

It this district had become more of a community-oriented one, as we also pointed out in the chapter, that should have been reflected as well in its vandalism rates. In fact, they point strongly in that direction. Thus, during the period from 1971 to 1978, broken glass panes were down from 5.150 to 2,600; unlawful entries from 160 to 95; and fires from 14 to 3. This confirms what many observers of urban schools have known for a long time -- that those minority area schools regarded locally as community institutions, rather than as "colonial" outposts manned by outsiders and not oriented toward community needs, are likely to be treated with more pride and respect. They, thus, have more legitimacy. District B is an example of this, having moved a long way toward making its schools legitimate social institutions. Notwithstanding some continuing problems, decentralization is clearly working in this district.

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* Districts located far away from particular high schools, send fewer students to them, all other things being equal, than those that are nearer.

Moreover, all this is taking place with increasing staff integration as well. In 1978-79, the district had a broad ethnic representation among its principals, with 45.8% white, 37.5% Hispanic, and 16.7% black. This may be contrasted with the situation in 1971, when 90.9% of the principals were white, and the change in the total professional staff has been from 13.4% black, 5.1% Hispanic, and 81.4% whites in 1971 to 26.8% black, 27.1% Hispanic and 45.5% white in 1978. Under decentralization, this district has thus, become one of the most integrated ones in its staff of any in the city.

CHAPTER 4: DISTRICT C

Politically turbulent district encompassing diverse constituencies. Poor minority areas in south (Hispanic and black), ethnically mixed, lower middle class, transitional areas in the center; and predominantly white middle and upper middle income areas in the north. The latter has traditionally held the most power and elected the most CSB members.

CSB represents in extreme form many of the pathologies of less effective, highly politicized districts. Extremely factionalized, has no clear role definition, deeply involved in "patronage" politics and in administration, engages in little planning and policy making, has poor attendance (from among board members) at public meetings for which many members poorly prepared and conduct themselves in disorderly fashion, is publicly embroiled in petty, personal conflicts within its own ranks and in its relations with the superintendent, and has, as a result, lost much credibility with parents and school professionals. A FACTIONALIZED, CONFLICT-RIDDEN RATHER THAN PROBLEM-SOLVING BOARD.

No trust between superintendent and CSB. He reportedly spends as much as 2/3 of his time in conflict with a faction on his board, reflecting jurisdictional struggles. Schools run themselves, through a strong, effective (by and large) group of principals. District office and principals have mutually supportive relationship. Superintendent has taken some initiatives in promoting reading, writing, and oral expression. Maintains informal relationship with district educators, many of them his colleagues. Yet, has emphasized strong program of transferring out incompetent teachers who cannot be helped by upgrading efforts.

Many separate factions and interest groups, converging around two main coalitions: the superintendent, parents, principals, teachers, and a minority CSB faction on one side; and political clubs, the church, and a majority CSB faction on the other. Their conflicts revolve around the superintendent's tenure and powers. Superintendent has pursued an aggressive strategy of enlarging his political base among parents, teachers, principals, and community organizations, to ensure survival in office. The superintendent's series of 1-year contracts limit his authority and his political conflicts with CSB consume the limited resources of both sides.

In brief, a troubled, turbulent district whose politics are all-pervasive, not enough social peace for decentralization to be given an adequate test. Nevertheless, there are good schools and many able staff in schools and district office.

Our next district is one of the most ethnically and economically diverse ones in the city. Encompassing a large section of an outer borough, it has been very difficult to manage, raising serious questions as to whether any district of that size and diversity could ever be run effectively, regardless of the skills of its CSB and superintendent.

There are roughly five distinct areas within the district: two both devastated poverty areas in the South, one predominantly Hispanic and the other black; a transitional area in the center, undergoing significant ethnic succession from integrated lower middle class residents to a much more heavily minority population; and two fairly stable upper middle income white communities in the north that also contain a few low income housing projects. The poverty areas in the south have experienced considerable arson since decentralization began, and there has been a marked decline in public school enrollment there, with many of former residents moving up to the center of the district. In fact, there is a general south-to-north ethnic succession pattern throughout the district. There are no more viable neighborhoods in some of the southern areas, while those in the center and the north are trying desparately to maintain what they have, as new, lower income and more minority populations move in.

As one might expect, there is much animosity between the populations of the south and north. Those in the north have repeatedly told the district office that they are the district's "forgotten group" and that the white middle class have rights also. Meanwhile, those in the poverty area communities in the south kept demanding more services and saying that the northern area communities, whom they referred to as the "country clubbers", were really the favored ones. And the people in the center claimed that they were the abandoned group, nothing they were the only ones who had really made integration work. There was thus a strong feeling in the minority areas in the south that the white middle class in the north looked down on them and regarded itself as the elite of the district. And there was the equally strong feeling in the north that the people in the south were much too demanding for services and were scaring the district into granting them. As one of the superintendents recalled: "I remember that when I went to the middle class areas, they would give me a hard time, and then when I went to the south, they would, too. In the middle class communities, they told me that they had their own poor residents, but I told them these were just pockets. All our groups were fighting each other." Another superintendent also recalled: "This was really five districts in one. Whenever we had CSB meetings, I could always count on five vested interests, representing each of these areas, showing up. It was quite a job, balancing off all these groups. This was a tough district to manage."

While all these areas have community organizations actively involved in school district matters, those in the north are by far the best organized. The CSB has traditionally elected disproportionate numbers from there. The first CSB, for example, had as many as 5 or 6 from the north. And the area was so well-organized that in the 1977 election it managed to elect a write-in candidate of white ethnic background who had no prior involvement at all in the public schools -- being neither a parent, a civically-active person, or even a politically-aspiring one -- yet she received the most votes of all the candidates. The main interest groups from this area, in addition to parents and often superseding them on political matters like electing CSB members, are political clubs, the Catholic Church, and property-owner associations. The political clubs have been particularly successful in electing a majority to the CSB, much to the dismay of many parents, and a faction on one of the most recent boards (elected in 1977) was commonly referred to among district educators and parents as "the Chippewa Five" in explicit recognition of that club's role in electing these people.

Other interest groups have been active also, however, including unions, parents, and community action agencies. The teachers' union, District Council 37, and the union of school custodians have all been influential in electing CSB members sympathetic to their interests. The teachers were very effective, for example, in electing CSB members in 1973 and 1975 who opposed some of the policies of the then-superintendent that they regarded as anti-union. The superintendent and his board were at that time eliminating informal work assignment practices for custodians who had previously been allowed to work at schools of their choice. The district was also accelerating its programs of bringing up teachers on charges who were performing poorly and couldn't be helped by district upgrading programs (e.g., in-service training). Ironically, these unions now strongly support the present superintendent who as deputy superintendent at that time was the "tough guy" of the administration in charge of handling "incompetent" teachers.*

Parent associations have also been active in the district, both in individual schools and district-wide, through their President's Council. They have prevailed in some district staffing decisions, in the hiring of principals, and in getting more minority principals. They have also pressed to have "incompetent" teachers brought up on charges. Over time, parents have become much more sophisticated on many of these matters.

The traditional parent associations, however, have been much less effective in gaining representation in the district's poverty areas than have more militant, minority-based groups. The one such group that is particularly active in this district, having worked also in neighboring ones, is headed by one of the most effective Hispanic activists in the city. This group dominated the southern part of the district, using much more militant, direct action techniques than the white middle class parent associations to a point where the latter didn't even bother to organize those schools. "We really had two parent groups going in this district: This community action group and the parent associations", explained a white middle class parent association leader, "and we have always been wary of becoming involved in the schools in that poverty area."

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* We will discuss below what accounted for this change on the part of the teachers' union.

The community action group was a major force in the early years of decentralization, getting several minority principals selected and securing funding for and then running bilingual, after-school, and breakfast programs. The organization now has its offices and classroom facilities within this district, having lobbied vigorously and staged many sit-ins to secure them. As Hispanics and blacks have moved north from these arson-ridden and deteriorating minority areas, the group has developed plans to shift its operation to an area in the center where minorities are moving.

This group has been effective largely because of the political skills of its director and the parent colleagues she has trained. Having started in the early 1960s as a militant, direct action group, this organization had fine-tuned its political activism and education programs by the time school decentralization went into effect. It packed the halls at CSB meetings in the early 1970s, before other groups had become so mobilized, and it worked assiduously to secure the necessary CSB votes on actions that it wanted taken. There were instances, for example, when its leaders changed the vote of the board just during the course of an open CSB meeting, reminding board members of how they had voted them into office, by getting elected officials in attendance to put pressure on them and even by disrupting the meeting entirely while these pressures were being put on. Often the issue was one of selecting particular minority candidates as principals. In recent years, the group has been much more involved in running bilingual programs than in the kinds of miltant actions it had engaged in before, but it is likely to resume some of its former militancy in the coming years to secure the kinds of staff and programs in the center of the district that it had partially secured for the south.

The district has a wide variety of interest group conflicts, which is not surprising, given its diversity. They include the north vs. the south, the white middle class vs. poor minorities, Hispanic vs. black in the south, and Catholic vs. Jewish. The latter conflict is much less visible than the others, though it seems to exist around appointments of principals and district office administrators, including the superintendency. One CSB faction, for example, did not support the appointment or continued tenure of the present superintendent, endorsing instead a Catholic who had been a college administrator from outside the district. The church and political clubs in the northeastern part of the district were reported to have pressed for that appointment.*

Notwithstanding these many separate interest groups, two main coalitions have emerged in recent years, with one supporting the superintendent and the other opposing him. When selected for the position in 1976, he was made acting superintendent and has only been given one-year contracts since then, reflecting the CSB's limited confidence in his leadership. His position has never been that viable, then, and yet the CSB has never got itself together to replace him with somebody else. Moreover, conflicts between him and a faction on his CSB have escalated over the past couple of years to a point where much of his time has been taken up in defending himself against board criticism and in devising elaborate strategies to by-pass it. He has also pursued an aggressive strategy of enlarging his political base, to better ensure his survival in office. Though one CSB member in particular has given him a hard time, the board as a body has not worked well with him, either.

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* The present superintendent does, however, have a good working relationship with parochial school representatives. He has worked with them in providing staff training and curriculum for their schools, and they seem no longer involved in the politics of the district. He also got the support from three CSB members who were backed by the Catholic church, when he was first selected and worked well with them after that.

The loosely-joined coalition that support the superintendent includes parents, teachers, principals, district office staff, and some CSB members. These board members are usually parents or are education-oriented, rather than being affiliated with a political club. Many of his program and adminstrative decisions are made in the context of this struggle, often with an eye on increasing his support. Thus, in 1979, he appointed to the district office a parent leader who was also the President of the city-wide United Parents' Association. One of her main tasks in the new position was to involve parents in district programs through Parent Advisory Councils. His opposition on the CSB regard this as a form of patronage and charge that he does that in the appointments of professionals as well, providing these people with personal briefings and inside information on district matters.* Our point is not to make any negative value judgments about this activity, since no superintendent can survive without a political base, but rather to cite it as an indication of just how politicized this district is.

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* See the discussion below for an assessment of the parent's contributions.

The group who oppose the superintendent include mainly political clubs and churches, as well as some CSB members. One thing many of these participants have in common is an interest in controlling district patronage, though as just indicated, they also attribute that to him. A board member strongly opposing the superintendent, a former state senator, had been very active in securing paraprofessional and teacher aide jobs and had fought hard to insure that they would not be eliminated or cut back in a period of fiscal retrenchment. The superintendent, on the other hand, is a strong advocate of using traditional civil service criteria for selecting staff and placed a higher priority on retaining classroom teachers than did that board member. The issues went deeper than that, however, and the district has suffered from the CSB and superintendent being unable to work together in any kind of productive fashion.

History of Decentralization, Superintendents, and CSBs - One of the most significant things about decentralization when it first got underway was the nature of this district's boundaries. Inclusion of so many disparate areas, with each trying to maintain and/or expand its power, made it very difficult to manage in any peaceful way, as we have already noted. As one principal explained: "The fact that the district is this heterogeneous presents a problem because the different factions compete against each other. Each group tries to get the most for itself. Each is worried about how its area has changed, why it changed, how to keep it from changing, and trying to get back to what it was." While this diversity doesn't distinguish this district from some others, it exists in much more extreme form here. And the conflicts it has created make it difficult to attain the social peace required for the district to address its many educational problems in a sustained way.

One of the things that reinforced the conflict, particularly between minority areas in the south and white middle class communities in the north, was the latter's disproportionate representation on the CSB. Yet, the south did have the powerful community action group mentioned above, and that group commonly packed the halls of CSB meetings in the early years of decentralization, booing loudly when parent speakers from northern area schools identified themselves as such. Just the mention of their community by parents from the north was like a red flag and would consistently evoke negative demonstrations. In fact, the public hostilities got so strong that parent leaders from the north who spoke at CSB meetings soon didn't even mention where they were from. As one parent leader recalled: "We had some parent leaders identify themselves at these early CSB meetings by their particular neighborhood, and it was disastrous. This community group would have already packed the hall and they would boo loudly as soon as those areas were mentioned. Now we have trained our leaders to just name their schools and let it go at that." The animosity between the two groups was a racial and class as well as geographic one, and from the minority parents' perspective, the people from the north wanted especially to "hold minority throngs out of their community."

One of the first things the first CSB did, like its counterparts in other districts, was to choose a president and then a superintendent. It decided to rehire the incumbent, a very able educator and administrator, a man of quite liberal views on race and class issues, and also a person of high integrity and candor. Thus, when the board president first offered him the position, the superintendent said that he wasn't sure that this board was worthy of the office or that he would want to serve under them. They were almost all from the north, he told them, while the big problems in the district that he wanted to address were in the poor minority areas in the south. After a month or so, however, he decided to accept their offer. The board had interviewed other candidates as well, but he was their first choice and got the job.

By and large, his relation with the CSB was a good one. As he explained: "We got along well together. Since I had tenure at the central board, I knew I could always go back there, and I felt free to speak my mind. They knew I was always honest with them and I made it a point never to hold back anything or suddenly spring anything on them. And they kept to policy matters and let me run the district." At the same time, this CSB, like others throughout the city, was extremely active in the early years of decentralization. It was quite common, for example, for a private board evening meeting with the superintendent drag on until well after midnight before the board would call on the superintendent for his agenda of matters he wanted to discuss. That became wearing over time.

Much more important, however, was the militancy of minority parents in the south. They put tremendous pressure on the superintendent to respond immediately to their demands for relief from overcrowded schools, for more programs, more minority staff, etc. Though he supported community control, and made improving education in the poor minority areas his highest priority, he still became a target of protest, simply as the superintendent of the district. In the case of one parent association that was demanding more space and a new school as soon as possible to relieve its overcrowding, he indicated to the parents and to the Chancellor (who he demanded come to the district) that he would picket in public with the parents until a commitment was made to build a new school. But the protests went on, and in one instance he and a central board staff person were locked in a school by angry parents who said they would not let them out until the bulldozer appeared, breaking ground for the construction of a new school across the street. At that point, he decided that the time had come for him to retire, which he did shortly thereafter, following two years of service. One white middle class parent leader recalled: "He was a good educator, but he couldn't deal easily with some parents standing up and saying: 'I'll break your head, you m...f.., if you don't give us what we deserve.'" A principal summarized the situation well: "He left because of the politics under decentralization. It just turned him off."

In brief, this was an able, progressive, superintendent, long known within the system for his support of minority group interests, and a strong supporter of decentralization, who nevertheless became a victim of it. Angry, frustrated parents had turned their rage against him, assuming somehow that he had the power to respond quickly to their demands. He didn't, and they had the wrong target in terms of the political realities of the situation. Unfortunately, he sometimes wasn't confrontational enough with central board officials in pressing district demands, and some board members and parent leaders criticized him for that. A district administrator noted: "He was a sensitive intellectual and some of those parent groups and CSB members tried to chew him up."

The next superintendent the CSB selected was a man who had been the first superintendent's detuty. Both were white and Catholic, though that was not a significant issue in either's tenure; and both got along well with the most outspoken minority member of the CSB, and that was more important. The second superintendent was an outstanding educator who had done an exceptional job as teacher and principal within the district, before being selected as deputy when decentralization began. He then did an equally outstanding job as deputy, tending to many district problems -- overcrowding, more school construction, and curriculum, and soon gained the enthusiastic endorsement of the CSB. A tireless worker, he was also a masterful politician, a man of much charm and public relations skills, and effective in dealing with even the most militant community groups. As a top district staff person recalled: "He was a thick skinned guy, a handsome guy, and he was a consummate politician besides. He could sell heat on the equator." In fact, the group already described were among his biggest boosters, as it became apparent to them that he not only believed in decentralization but was doing everything he could and perhaps more to make it work.

Indeed, having learned a lot from his predecessor's experience, the second superintendent was most responsive to parent and community groups, and he constantly reached out to minority leaders, in attempts to improve education in their schools. As one such leader explained: "He had so much rapport with the community, and that was why he was such a good superintendent. Would you believe it that he often came down here and taught in our classes in the late afternoon, after he was done in the district office? And he gave us a breakfast program until we got our own funded. He would even call me at night, before an issue was to be discussed with his board, to find out how we felt about it. I still hear from him, many years after he resigned and went over to New Jersey."

Parents weren't the only constituencies in the district, however, and this superintendent had trouble with the teachers' and custodians' union, among others. They resented his demands on them, which we disucssed above, while he was doing everything possible to respond to parent concerns for improved education. There soon developed at least two prevailing views about his style in relation to community groups. The more negative view acknowledged his many program efforts but claimed he gave in too easily to political pressures. One former CSB member noted: "He was an educated individual with a fine personality. But he would give in to the one that used to yell the loudest." A district educator recalled: "He was a consummate politician who found it hard to say no to people." Still another stated: "He became more politicized over time and kept himself in office by selling little pieces of everything, including himself." On the other side was the widely held parent and educator point of view, shared as well by many CSB members, that he was a "top notch educator" who "did a lot for kids."

In fact, this superintendent did do a lot to improve education in the district. He developed many reading programs, math labs, and bilingual programs. He and his staff wrote one of the first bilingual proposals in the city. He set up three alternative schools for students near suspension from regular schools. And he developed some extraordinary programs with unexpended funds.

On the latter, it was a common experience for headquarters to inform the districts, near the very end of the school year, that they had unspent monies that could not be "rolled over" to the next fiscal year, but had to be used right away. In several instances, this superintendent developed unusually innovative programs with that money. One year, he sent 150 students to London for a week. Another year, he sent 120 students to Washington. In still another, the district rented a boat, and students went out with rods and reels for a day of fishing. Many of the minority students in the district, though they lived so near the eastern shore of this borough, had never been out in a boat in their life. All of these trips were, in turn, used as vehicles for educational experiences -- in social studies, science, and the like. As one top district educator explained: "These experiences will undoubtedly stay with the kids for the rest of their lives. The ideas were the superintendent's, and the CSB told him to go to it. Otherwise, this money would have had to be returned to the city."

As the city's fiscal crisis deepened in 1975, after this superintendent had been in office for 3 years, it became increasingly difficult for him to sustain the many programs he had developed. He recalled with disappointment: "My biggest problem was the cutback in 1974-75. Many of my exciting projects had to be terminated. We had an art center and music programs at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. A lot of that stuff went by the wayside. The last two years I was there were very difficult in trying to keep as much alive as I could, in the face of the cuts."

Meanwhile, this superintendent began having problems with two CSB members who regarded his enrichment programs as superfluous in a period of fiscal cutbacks. Both were quite conservative in their educational philosophy, had disagreed with his approaches for some time, and finally found justification than before to be even more critical. "These two women were the people who gave him the most trouble," reported a CSB member who was a strong supporter of the superintendent. "Both of them actually drove him out of the district through their harassment. Their contention at the time was that while the district's school population and funds were dwindling, they felt the superintendent ought not continue his practice of providing art, music, and culture as part of the regular school program. They wanted the funds for those particular programs spent on providing basic education."

The superintendent himself acknowledged that he had problems at this time. "I got into a lot of trouble doing things for kids," he noted, "and I was very happy to get into trouble that way." Over time, then, the job had fewer satisfactions for him, and in 1976, he suddenly resigned. much to the surprise of people in the district, and much to the dismay of most of them. He was only in his early 50s when he resigned, but he had accumulated enough of a pension to be able to do so, as he got an attractive offer as junior high school principal in a suburban New Jersey community near his home. A district staff person summarized well the superintendent's disenchantment with the job: "The fun went out of it for him after awhile. For a long time, he got a lot of enjoyment in the job. There were all those great programs we talked about -- London, Washington, the boat trips. And he was so good at getting groups in the district together. He kept this place from being another Ocean Hill Brownsville. But by 1975, and early 1976, with the budget cuts, the fun programs had gone. He was taking more criticism from the UFT. And some of those conservative parents who didn't like his programs got to him. Since the economics were all in favor of his leaving, it made a lot of sense for him to get out."

In brief, the pressures under decentralization in this district had led to the rsignation of two very capable superintendents, with the second, in particular, having developed close relationships with parents and community leaders. Both were strong believers in community control, but became the victims of the politics that it spawned. It was for that reason, in part, that we noted at the beginning of the chapter that this district seemed almost unmanageable, given its tremendous size and diversity of interest groups. The second superintendent had learned a lot from the first's problems, but even he, with all his skills and commitments to decentralization, felt increasingly frustrated at not being able to do what he wanted to. He faced a few very difficult problems. For one thing, the first CSB had given him a 4-year contract that the second board felt saddled with, much to its resentment, and some of its members worked increasingly to try to limit his authority. In addition, there were the problems with the teachers and custodians' unions whose leaders and rank and file felt he was too responsive to parent needs and not enough to theirs. And finally, he was faced with the conservative middle class parents on his board who preferred a more traditional curriculum than the one he followed. It was hard for him to sustain that much enthusiasm for the job in the face of these problems, given the attractive opportunities he had elsewhere.

After the second superintendent's resignation, his deputy, in turn, was appointed, and the CSB immediately made certain that it would not provide the long-term contract that it felt saddled with. So it has given the third superintendent a series of one-year contracts since then, providing him with none of the job security required to exercise effective leadership. For the first few years, it only designated him as "acting" superintendent, further limiting his authority. In brief, many of the most acute pathologies of superintendent-CSB relations under decentralization got played out in this district. And the board's "cure" for the problems it saw before in the superintendent having a long-term contract may well have been worse than any problems that that arrangement brought with it.

CSBs - The history of the CSBs in District C recapitulates in several respects that of many others throughout the city. The first board, though unrepresentative, with its many northern area members, was quite effective. Its members included some public spirited professionals, including at least one attorney, a physician, and an educator. They were a competent, conscientious group who were very effective at pressing school headquarters to provide resources for the district, and they kept to a policy role. As one top district educator explained: "They let the superintendents run the district, pick their own staff, and hire and fire on their own. They told them: 'If you don't do your job well, we will come after you, but we won't bother you on all these things."

By the second CSB elections in 1973, however, the district was changing. The teachers' union became much more influential, electing many more people to the board, because of its concerns about what it regarded as the second superintendent's anti-union and prodecentralization positions. A top educator in the district recalled: "The UFT was not fond of the superintendent, and they got very active in the 1973 elections, to ensure that they controlled the CSB and therefore controlled him. He was not a favorite of the union." Thus, in 1973, at least 4 UFT candidates got elected, and it got 6 elected in 1975. The union had become concerned about the superintendent's many grievance hearings on unsatisfactory teachers, and its members felt he was capitulating to community groups and being too hard on the teachers.

After 1973, this district's CSBs thus pressed to curtail the superintendent's powers. "They had been disgruntled with many things he did," recalled one district professional, "particularly with staff assignments and appointments that he had made unilaterally, having been delegated those powers by the first CSB. The superintendent and that board had done a lot of things that later boards wanted to reverse and that antagonized not only teachers, but others as well. We had the big battle with the custodians over their assignments to schools, with the superintendent and board wanting to control all that. And there were conflicts with the teachers' union and CSA as well."

The second superintendent was thus carrying over policies with succeeding boards that he and his first board had worked out, and since these later boards were more union-oriented, he was unable to continue the policies without antagonizing them. "Many union people on the CSB developed a distrust of the superintendent over time, and they wanted to do away with him," explained a district staff person. "They felt he had capitulated to the community. It was not true, but that was how they perceived him."

When the second superintendent's deputy was selected in 1976, the CSB maintained its posture of limiting the superintendent's authority, and the conflicts between the board and superintendent have, if anything, got worse since then. The board has made it impossible for the superintendent to run the district, but it doesn't either. The main trend has been for this district's boards to become increasingly involved in administrative matters and to thereby limit the superintendent's authority. At the same time, however, they have abdicated their policy role, and by

1977, the board had ceased to function in any effective way. Indeed, it barely functioned at all and developed many of the pathologies of the worst boards in the city.

More specifically, those pathologies included: (1) the board's failure to develop any clear role definition; (2) its limited involvement in planning or policy making, all the while preventing the superintendent from assuming those tasks; (3) its continued involvement in administration, and, for some board members, in "patronage" politics on matters of staff selection; (4) its poor attendance at public meetings for which many members are poorly prepared and conduct themselves in unparliamentary and disorderly ways, often shouting at one another and calling one another insulting names; (5) its extreme factionalism; and (6) its subsequent loss of credibility with most district constituencies - parents, community leaders, and educators.

The conditions just described came about for several reasons. First, political clubs, church interests, and the union gained greater representation, superseding parents and professionals, and making narrow political interests more of board priority than setting policy and improving the schools. Second, the district's diversity of interest groups increased, as more constituencies became organized, and this made it very difficult to coalesce the factions. The first board had a leader who did so, but subsequent ones did not The succeeding boards thus failed to function as a single, unified body, and they floundered as a result. While there were some able and committed "public interest" oriented members on the 1975 and 1977 boards, those people didn't have the political base or skills to bring the factions together.

One further irritant was a deeply personal feud that developed between the third superintendent and one board member who functioned for a while as its president. That board member, a black politician, had been deeply involved in providing jobs to minority people, not only as paraprofessionals and teacher aides, but in district office staff positions as well. He had supported the appointment of the district's Title I coordinator when decentralization began, and top professionals in the district had serious questions about the competence and integrity of that office. "Money was disappearing," explained a district office administrator of those early years, "and we put many people on it to find out what was going on. We could never come up with anything, but we even contacted the central board and a Title I investigating team to try to get to the bottom of it." Neither of the first two superintendents could do much on the matter, but the person was finally removed under the third. While this board member was that third superintendent's strong supporter when he was appointed, the intensity of his later attacks suggested some sharp differences over this and related matters. As one board member explained: "This board member, when he was president of the board and chairman of the Title I Advisory Committee, ran the district as a patronage operation. In one year, he hired so many paras that the superintendent found out there wasn't enough money left to hire teachers."

The third and most recent superintendent, on his side, has a different set of constituencies than this board member. He is oriented much more toward hiring "professionals" and toward following civil service lists and criteria of "merit". From the perspective of this black board member as well as some minority leaders in the district, that was simply a different patronage system, but it was seen as patronage, nevertheless. And it was what they had hoped decentralization might eliminate. The Title

I director, however, was a broader issue and related to some basic questions of curruption and incompetence that the superintendent rightfully sought to correct by having her removed.

The weaknesses of this CSB, however, went way beyond staffing issues, as important as they are. With the exception of two or three "public interest" oriented members, the board barely functioned. To illustrate: One year, the superintendent had to act on the budget unilaterally, because the board hadn't taken it up that spring and didn't have a large enough quorum in its summer meetings to take a vote. Regular meetings were devoted instead to internal bickering and quarrels with the superintendent over who had what authority. That same summer, only 5 board members showed up for the meeting in which it had to elect officers, and one of the influential board members who was absent then charged that the election was illegal when a colleague from an opposing faction was elected president. He appealed to the Chancellor and new elections had to be held. Another year, the board was scheduled to vacate its premises in June and hadn't been able to come to any decision on the issue when the time came to leave. Board members were often as much as an hour late for monthly CSB meetings with the public, many left early or wandered around during the meetings, and most gave the community the impression that they were quite uninformed about key issues on the agenda, having failed to do their homework.

A board member for whom parents and district educators had the most respect noted: "In the past 10 years, I would say that the quality of school boards in this district has deteriorated...I feel that parliamentary procedures have caused us the most trouble. The school board does not have a parliamentarian. As a result, we spend more time fighting over issues than we do over determining policies around questions posed to us by the superintendent or by situations in the district. And it is very rare that we hear of a candidate who is running to represent parents. In our district, there is no real discussion on the board about policies. In fact, whenever there is some discussion about an issue, it's always with an eye toward fulfilling some sort of hidden agenda of a board member. I know from my own experience that sometimes I'll put up a resolution and give the school board a really superficial presentation, because I know they're not familiar with the issue, and unless there's something in it for them, they're not really interested. Also, if the discussion gets very elaborate, political interests will emerge, and the discussion will become very intense, and what we'll have is controversy and no action."

These problems were certainly not unique to this board as we have indicated in some of the other case studies. But they seem much more severe there, and they have demoralized parents and educators so much that they have become quite embittered about decentralization. To add to their frustrations, the CSB elected in 1980 has many of the same people and/or interests represented in previous boards, reflecting the power of the non-parent and non-education-oriented political groups that had elected the original boards. To illustrate the extent of those frustrations, consider the following comments from principals and parents:

> One primary problem in the district is just trying to get the board to get together to meet. As far as I know, the only thing that the board and superintendent do when they meet is to fight.
>
> Principal

> Personally, there is no board member I would want to call on if I really needed help. The board as a whole has done very little for anything or anybody. As far as being representative of the community, the board really represents nobody, except politically aspiring individuals.
>
> Principal

Parents are more professional than the board members. Some of the board members are bright, but together they don't do anything productive. They are very hostile toward each other, and they never prepare or read anything.

Principal

They are always divisive. They spend more time arguing than solving problems. And it has got much worse. They are always split on everything. They change back and forth. And they make it extremely difficult for the superintendent. Their time is taken up by nonsense. That time is desperately needed to deal with real issues.

Principal

The members of the board hate each other. You could not get these 9 people to agree on the time of day. It is worse now than ever, and it has been getting worse and worse over the last 3 years. Maybe in the last 10 years they have passed 5 meaningful policy statements. They could never get 5 people to agree on anything. When there is a position vacated, it takes at least two years till it is filled, because the board can't agree. They fill up their time creating problems. They never do anything as a group that is positive.

To be a superintendent in this district is putting yourself on a stake. They will roast you for 4 years. It's castration. The rite of catration takes 4 years to be completed. People here are destroyed. True professionals get ripped to shreds.

Principal

The CSB is highly divided and divisive. They are always involved in squabbles. They all each other names in public meetings. If they could get to talk it would be fine. What goes on is utter nonsense. It does not make for district leadership. The superintendent tries to lead and they yell at him, but they don't do a damn thing themselves.

Principal

Nobody is happy with this board. They have not done a thing. They are always fighting between themselves. They never do their homework. They don't do what they should be doing. It is a total waste of time.

Parent leader

The board serves for their own personal benefit. That usually means some political interest. They have sent representatives to meetings in California, and these seem to take priority over dealing with issues with the district.

Parent leader

CSB-Superintendent Relationship - The above discussion clearly indicates that relations between the CSB and superintendent are severely strained in this district. The superintendent and his staff indicated that up to 2/3 of his time is spent in struggles with a faction on his board over who has what authority. As the board refuses and/or is unable to set policy on critical matters like the budget, staffing, curriculum priorities, and district and school buildings, the superintendent sometimes does so on his own, informing the board after making his decisions. The board then accuses him of usurping its authority, questions the adequacy of his decisions, and then fails to generate enough consensus among its members to formulate positions itself. When the superintendent stops short of taking action on critical issues, board members then accuse him of failing to exercise effective leadership. As one such board member who has been in the most conflict with the superintendent insisted: "In terms of academic or educational issues, the superintendent is particularly lax. He hates to make any educational decisions. Presently we are the ones who are responsible for setting curriculum criteria and program objectives." Yet later he noted: "Another aspect of the superintendent's operating style is to avoid the school board. I got a call from a principal who submitted a proposal to the federal government for $165,000. That proposal was never shown to the CSB." Had the superintendent consulted with the board on the proposal, there might never have emerged any board position on its desirability or program substance.

The superintendent's own version of the situation aptly summarizes his dilemna. "My problem here," he explained, "is that I appeared tentative, but that was a result of my political situation with this inactive board. If I take any initiative, I am damned for trying to make policy. But if I don't, I am damned for not exercising leadership. So I lose either way. Where I see it as necessary, where an issue is important enough, I do make decisions and take action, and then let the CSB react. But I have to be tentative at best on some important issues, because of the nature of this CSB."

We have found that districts tend to be effective when the CSB delegates much administrative authority to the superintendent and plays mainly a policy role, when there is agreement between it and the superintendent on role definitions as related to policy and administration, and when the board itself has enough internal consensus on these matters. The failure of boards to generate such an internal consensus often contributes to problems on the first two issues. And this district illustrates these difficulties to an extreme degree. Because of the differences we found between this superintendent and his board, no educational or policy leadership is possible there.

The problem has been exacerbated in this instance by the superintendent's handling of the conflict. He not only spends much of his time in the struggle, but he almost seems to enjoy the challenge. The main strategy he has followed has been to try to develop his own political base as broadly as possible so that he might be less vulnerable to CSB criticism and obstruction of his efforts at leading the district. That strategy has involved working very closely with parents, the teachers' union, the principals' association, and those CSB members who support his efforts.

Superintendent's Management Style - In some districts, it is possible to describe and analyze the superintendent's management style in some detail, as it relates to educational improvement efforts. While that is somewhat the case in this district, the politics surrounding the superintendent's conflicts with his CSB are so all-pervasive and consume so much of his time, that we will have less to say about his management style. He hasn't had the political base or time to really develop it. The main point is that politics permeate his efforts to lead the district, more than for most superintendents. And as our historical account suggested, it is politics resulting from the situation that he and his board find themselves in -- a large, diverse district, with power having slipped away from parents and public-spirited citizens to narrowly-based pressure groups with a minimum of interest in education.

(1) Curriculum Style - There is no coherent or unified curriculum style emanating from the district office. The superintendent has been too involved in a politics of personal survival to have developed one. Instead, each principal is left to run the school as that princpal's philsophy and local need dictates. This has resulted in a wide diversity of curriculum emphases. At one extreme is a highly publicized, open education school, that is the district's magnet school in the arts, originally opened in a bowling alley. It reflects the humanistic philosophy of its creative principal and is a school whose parents had a strong voice in selecting him. Moreover, parents, teachers and students have all been involved in developing the curriculum, and the school's record, as indicated by the academic performance of its students -- many from poor minority backgrounds -- is very impressive. It draws students from all over the district. At the other extreme are some of the more traditional schools in conservative areas. Insofar as this district has many able

principals, this strategy of letting them determine curriculum priorities has resulted in many good programs. One of the perhaps unanticipated consequences, then, of the leadership struggles between the superintendent and CSB is that the schools have been left to run themselves.

Even if the superintendent had more authority, however, he might well have followed this strategy. Indeed, though the district has had three different superintendents, there has been much continuity in the approach of giving the schools autonomy. As the present superintendent explained: "I basically support the philosophy of my predecessor that principals should set the educational philosophy for their school in consonance with local parent need. When I was a teacher, I resented people coming in and telling me what to do. I believe principals have to have certain prerogatives as educators and managers. We allow them to run their schools subject to our review. I let them run the schools on their own, with a loose reign. Only if they make decisions that may violate district policy, as on the union contract or bilingual programs, will I come down on them."

This is not to say that the district office has been inactive in its curriculum function. The superintendent and his staff have pushed hard to have minimum standards for all the schools and have emphasized reading, writing, and oral communcations skills. There is now a district-wide testing program in reading that the superintendent has initiated. He also works closely with the principals to help each school set up its own reading and communications skills program, and there is a district-wide committee composed of the superintendent, district office staff, and principals that is working on this. As one principal explained: "Our superintendent is extremely involved in forming reading standards for the district as a whole and works closely with principals. The aim is to get each principal to set up a reading program that is appropriate for their own particular school. He set up a committee on which my colleagues and I participate." Another noted: "The superintendent meets regularly with parents and asks principals for their opinions. He actively seeks out what the problems are. We had a session recently where we looked at the real problems with reading. He requested a total plan for reading improvement in the schools. And he asked some of the older principals with the most experience to be available to help some of the more inexperienced ones. He is very forthright and fair. He does not blame principals and teachers for reading scores if the children just arrived at the school. But he is pushing for improvement. He intervenes on behalf of the principals when there is trouble with a teacher. He is not afraid of the teachers' union. He is fair, but he is tough, too. He made it so that teachers stopped taking off days before and after holidays. He is monitoring text book orders of principals to be sure that what is ordered is relevant for reading. He is making sure that teachers in all subjects have reading materials."

Given the conflicts between the superintendent and his board, however, there is an understandable difference of opinion on how much educational leadership he is in fact providing. One board member, for example, even invited in a reporter from The Daily News to document what he regarded as scandalously low reading scores in the district. As a principal reported: "That board member is out to get the superintendent. He and a state senator from the district were the ones who sent The Daily News reporter into the district office to interview the superintendent and write the article in the paper. That reporter arrived there in the limousine of the Senator. It was a vicious article whose aim was to slander the superintendent." The article quoted the board member as saying that the district's troubles had resulted from "a lack of leadership by district superintendent. Our district has shown greater retardation in the past year than any other district in the Bronx," the CSB member was quoted as saying. The superintendent then was quoted as listing all the initiatives he had taken to upgrade reading in the district -the district-wide reading committee of principals and district office staff, the district-wide testing program, etc. Finally, an angry parent from a district elementary school with the lowest reading scores in the city, blamed both the superintendent and the CSB. "None of then are doing anything," she said. "You go to school board meetings and they're sitting there fighting. Then they get upset when they see the test results. It's our children who suffer."

One result of this article and the controversy it sparked was that parents from all over the district wrote angry letters to the Daily News, protesting what they regarded as an effort mainly to slander the superintendent rather than to shed light on problems. Another result was an intensification of the superintendent's original program to improve reading.

As for other district office initiatives, there have been fewer of them than under the second superintendent, mainly because of continued budget cutbacks. In addition, the present superintendent has purposely cut back on those programs that were spread too thin to have much effect. He has thus pursued a strategy of administrative and program consolidation that matches the fiscal situation. "My predecessor's strong suit was in curriculum," he explained. "He started many programs. When I took over, I found there were so many programs that the district schools couldn't follow through. To correct this fragmentation, I cut back a number of these programs after I became superintendent. He ran an open office. District and school staff came to him all the time with ideas. If he liked the idea, he would implement it or modify it to his own liking. As a result of his openness, we had a lot of things good and bad going on. My own preference is to be more analytical and skeptical. I want people who have ideas to sell me on a concept. If the idea is sound, I'll go for it."

Two curriculum areas the superintendent has stressed in addition to reading are math and science. He has initiated a marine biology program and several math training programs for teachers from the district office. He has also supported programs in the arts. And he meets monthly with his principals and makes many unannounced visits to the schools.

In brief, the district has no single educational philosophy but rather has a diversity of programs that reflect, in turn, the diversity of principal styles and community interests that exist there. Enrichment programs have, of necessity, been cut back, and there is a strong emphasis on basic skills training, in reading, math, and written and oral communications. There is clearly an appearance of much less curriculum innovation under the present superintendent than under his predecessor. But that reflects fiscal cutbacks as well as the superintendent's preferences for programs that have proved effective in the past. A major point is that the politics of the CSB-superintendent relationship casts as much of a veil on this issue as it does on most other things.

(2) The District Office and the Schools - The schools, therefore, have been left to run themselves in large degree and decentralization to the school level has been quite pronounced in this district. Technical assistance has, by necessity, been limited from the district office, since its staff has been cut back in recent years.

However, because of the strong push to improve reading, math, and other basic skills, there has been a lot of monitoring and assistance relative to programs in those areas. Also, in addition to the district-wide committee of principals that meets monthly to discuss district policy on curriculum, particularly reading, the superintendent drops in on schools throughout the district to evaluate programs for himself and discusses his findings with the principals. "I like to visit my schools unannounced at every opportunity I have," he explained. "That way I get to see actual school and teacher performance. In monitoring the school, I don't want to supplant the principal. I believe strongly in allowing for the exercise of local option. I want my principals to run their schools, and the less a principal needs to involve me, the district office, and the CSB, the better it is for all concerned."

The principals, by and large, support this approach, and respect the superintendent's efforts to try to provide educational leadership in a politically volatile situation. As one respected principal explained: "People like the superintendent because if he says something, that's it. People trust him, because he does tell the trust and does not try to placate people. He is very forthright. He meets with parents and asks principals for their opinions." Another observed: "He is a competent, highly principled person. If he believes that something is wrong, he will stick with it, trying to change it in the face of pressures not to do so. He is being upset by the CSB. But he is extremely involved in forming reading standards for the district as a whole and works closely with principals."

(3) District Office and Professional Staff - As indicated, the relationship between the superintendent and the principals and teachers has been a collaborative, mutually supportive one in this district. The superintendent was a former teacher and supervisor in the district and maintains close informal, collegial relations with school staff. He is supportive of principals' efforts to develop programs and to deal with poorly performing teachers. His district-wide policy committee of elementary school principals meets monthly to discuss curriculum issues. And he provides training and support for principals who are trying to transfer out ineffective teachers who don't respond to efforts at helping them upgrade their skills.

Though this superintendent was the "tough guy" of the previous administration, responsible for bringing up unsatisfactory teachers on charges, he has established a positive relation with the teachers' union in recent years. They see him as a trustworthy, fair, and supportive person. As a top union official in the district reported: "He tries to run the district on an up-and-up basis. He has an open door policy for parents. Also, once a month for 2 hours, the UFT members are invited, and they can speak openly on issues that concern them. People that come up with new ideas are encouraged to develop them. He is responsive to teachers wanting to develop their own programs. He will scrounge up money for them. The district office has built up credibility with the UFT. They work for the teachers and not in opposition to them. There is no animosity. The superintendent is extremely responsive to grievances. He takes them very seriously. At times he has made decisions against the UFT, but I still respect his judgment because it is honestly what he believes to be fight and not based on political considerations."

A critical aspect of the superintendent's style that has helped solidify his relations with the teachers and principals is his staffing policies. He strongly opposed one board member's attempts to hire and retain more paraprofessionals and teacher aides, at the cost of having fewer teachers. And he supported a more extensive use of civil service lists for staff appointments. As he explained: "I used to get calls all the time from politicians recommending people for jobs. Since I feel jobs should be assigned on the basis of merit. I would tell whomever called that what they were asking was out of bounds. After the political clubs and politicians heard this a couple of times, they stopped calling me."

The superintendent was thus able to gain the strong support of the educators in the district, through a combination of curriculum, monitoring, and staffing practices. This has, at the same time, alienated two groups -- a white ethnic group in the north associated wtih political clubs, and the Catholic Church; and minority leaders in the south, both of them pushing for patronage jobs. While they regarded his approach as simply another form of patronage, one for the "insider professionals", he regarded it as a more principled one than theirs. At any rate, the district's teachers and principals, including their associations, were clearly part of his coalition.

(4) District Office and Community - In a similar manner, parents within the district also regarded the superintendent in a favorable light. He was responsive to parent grievances and has pressed in recent years to give them a voice in school decisions. As one of the most influential parent leaders explained: "The superintendent is not in an easy position. Considering the way the board consistently ties his hands, he is pretty effective. If given a chance with a good board who would be supportive of his efforts, he could do a good job. He is open to parents. They have been given the right to voice opinions and have a say, in evaluating teachers' performances. It has helped bridge the gap between the professionals and the parents, so that the professional is not just up there and the parents ignorant down below. Parent participation is very good in the district, much greater than in other districts. The district office and superintendent encourage it. There are many committees that parents participate in. Every parent group in every school has a parent room. Very often there are parents at the district office. There is a lot of involvement." This perception, in turn, matched what the superintendent reported as his policy. "I have tried to encourage parent participation," he said, "by mandating parental involvement in setting school priorities."

One of the superintendent's main staff appointments in 1979 was that of an influential parent leader to a key position, in charge of recruiting parents for service on Parent Advisory Councils in Title I and other programs. A former CSB member, she had voted against the original appointment of the superintendent and had consistently opposed many of the positions he had taken on district policy matters. This action further solidified parent support, though CSB members opposed to the superintendent regarded it as a blatant example of patronage and co-optation. As one board member cynically observed: "He put her on the payroll to get her support and that of parents in his effort to renew his contract."

Notwithstanding that cynical view, this appointment has had many psoitive effects on the district. "Since she came on here," the superintendent reported, "there has been a 50% increase in attendance at tfhe PAC and President's Council meetings. She has led workshops of parents in training them on questions they should ask their principal. Sure, many principals were uptight when I appointed her, but she has done a great job. And decentralization required parent input."

The CSB, by contrast, has not treated parents with the same responsiveness or concern, however, by the CSB as a body, though some board members are parents themselves. As one parent leader bemoaned: "Nobody is happy with this board. They have not done a thing. They are always fighting among themselves. They never do their homework. They don't know what they should be doing. It is a total waste of time." A district staff person summarized the frustration parents had experienced in trying to deal with the board: "Parents have become very vocal and educated in this district. But they have been totally frustrated by the CSB. It ignores them totally. It treats them terribly, and that has resulted in a great deal of parent activities. Our parents have educated themselves. They know a lot and are tired of the CSB ingoring them. We had a parent group who visited a district on Long Island where they use a computer to do teaching. The parents were extremely impressed in discovering a new method of teaching which seems to be yielding positive results. They came back eager to try it out and proposed that money be allocated for that purpose. When one CSB member had three resolutions for rehiring paras, teacher aides, and teachers, the parents were being totally ingored. Our Parent Advisory Council had put in the work to find out what they wanted and they recommended it, but it was totally ignored. The parents had gone to that district at the suggestion of someone in the district office." It may well be that these parents were caught in a crossfire between the superintendent's staff and the CSB, but the incident also illustrates a common parent complaint that the CSB is not oriented toward their interests.

(5) District Office Bureaucracy - The same kinds of conflicts between the superintendent and CSB that exist on matters of staffing and parent interest exist in relation to the district office staff. The latter constitutes a mixed group in terms of backgrounds and loyalties. Some are holdovers from the past, having gained their appointments under previous boards, while several are new people that the superintendent appointed, much to the consternation of those CSB members who actively oppose a continuation of his contract. From their vantage point, he functions through administrative assistants who they regard as part of his patronage network and who have no authority. As one of them complained: "He won't even allow a deputy superintendent's position to be created to help him run the district, because he feels the school board will try to groom that person for his job. So he operates instead through a series of assistants, and, as a consequence, the office is run in a very haphazard manner." From the superintendent's perspective, however, he is

trying to develop a competent staff that will be loyal to him.

As in other districts where the CSB has been in conflict with its superintendent, board members in this one have at times contacted district office staff directly on some matter, without informing the superintendent. It apparently got so blatant that the superintendent actually wrote a letter to all district office staff, directing them not to talk with school board members without first discussing the matter wtih him. He has thus been trying to develop a staff that would be responsible to him first and that would work collaboratively with him. Since he inherited some staff who previous boards and/or superintendents had hired and who had some political base themselves in the district, it was not that easy to form his own group quickly. Indeed, as we discussed earlier, the Title I director, who had the strong support of one CSB member, stayed on for many years after parents, superintendents, and some board members realized she was mishandling funds and was not competent enough to continue in the position. As one parent leader and former CSB member noted: "We had a Title I driector here who was terrible, a patronage appointment from the original CSB. It took us a long time to get her out. We asked for a staff investigation of Title I in this district and the man from Albany who had to deal with her over the years did it. He found much non-compliance on her part with Title I guidelines and we eventually had to pay back $45,000, after we narrowed it down."

In brief, the quality of district office staff in this highly politicized district has been affected by that politics, and it has not been easy for the superintendent to pull together a group that would work in a completely collaborative way with him. He has made important inroads in that regard, but his future success probably depends in large part on securing a stronger mandate from his board than he has had in the past. It is unclear whether or not that will be forthcoming.

Conclusions - Decentralization has not had the positive impacts in this district that it has had in the others we have discussed. CSBs have progressively deteriorated, as power has gravitated away from parents and civic minded people to those supported by political clubs, the church, and other such groups. We have attributed the problems not so much to personalities, though they obviously play some role, but rather to the situation in which the district finds itself. The district may well be too diverse to be manageable as a single entity. It clearly does not have the social peace that decentralization advocates argued would result from that reform, having become more rather than less turbulent under decentralization.

Nevertheless, even in this district, there are some very good schools, most of them in the central and northern areas. The district has some excellent principals, and the district office has been taking some productive initiatives in providing support for basic skills and other programs.It is difficult to say whether the district's performance would be better, and to what degree, were the board a more effective one that hired a superintendent it had confidence in and delegated the amount of authority needed to lead the district. That clearly has not happened here, and the extent of parent and staff demoralization may well have hurt the district in ways that will show up in the future, in student performance. What we have in this case is the absence of some of the pre-requisites for district success that exist in the districts previously described.

Indicators of Student and District Performance

We have characterized this district as one that has experienced much political turbulence and instability under decentralization, particularly since 1976, under its present superintendent. We have attributed this turbulence in part to the tremendous size and diversity of the district, rather than to any demographic changes. While there have been some such changes, they are minimal, compared with most other districts in its category that have both white and minority students. Blacks increased from 31.6% to 36.9, and Hispanics from 45.4 to 50 during the period from 1970 to 1978, while whites declined from 22.6 to 15.2, but again, those are not significant changes.

TABLE 4.1

DISTRICT C
Reading Scores for 1971 and 1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change (-)
Two	2.4	2.5	0.1
Three	2.8	3.5	0.6
Four	3.5	4.6	1.1
Five	4.3	5.3	1.0
Six	5.5	6.1	0.6
Seven	5.6	7.0	1.4
Eight	6.6	8.3	1.7
Nine	8.2	9.1	0.9

Trends in reading scores seem to have reflected those in the district's politics. From 1970-1975, the district did better than the city-wide trend, closing the gap at every grade level, as Table 6 indicates. While its scores never caught up to those city-wide, they were quite close by 1975. Since then, by contrast, the district has lost ground, relative to to the city as a whole. Thus, from 1975 to 1979, the gap has increased for 6 of the 8 grades on which data are available. This suggests that it amy well have lost what momentum it had in those early years. While the fiscal crisis of 1975 may be seen as having contributed to the district's problems, this district wasn't any more hard hit than any of the others, so some other factors may be operating. We would suggest that the district's volatile politics and the increasingly tenuous position of the superintendent have made themselves felt.

TABLE 4.2

Change in Reading Scores (1971-1979)

Grade	District C	Citywide	Difference between District C & All Schools (-)
Two	0.1	-0-	0.1
Three	0.6	0.1	0.5
Four	1.1	0.6	0.5
Five	1.0	0.7	0.3
Six	0.6	0.6	-0-
Seven	1.4	1.0	0.4
Eight	1.7	1.1	0.6
Nine	0.9	1.1	(-0.2)

Data on attendance show that trend as well. Average daily attendance was 85.3 in 1971 and dropped to 84.8 in 1977, compared with a slight increase city-wide. And again, the gap has widened since 1975, when the district was just about the same as the city.

And yet, vandalism indicators do not show a decline. In fact, on every indicator, the district is doing better. Broken glass panes have thus declined from just under 10,000 in 1971 to 5,750 in 1978. Unlawful entries have declined from 153 to 110 during that period. And fires are down from 6 to 3. In this sense, the trend is not uniform, though there is the falling off in student achievement.

Indeed, as we discussed in the chapter, there has been much public controversy about low reading scores in the district. One CSB member complained to the press about this condition a couple of years ago, and it seems to still be a contested issue.

As for trends in district staffing practices, there has been an increase in the proportion and numbers of minority educators. Considering all categories of professionals, blacks are up from 8 to 21% and Hispanics from 2.9 to 15%, both fairly significant increases. And they are distributed evenly across the various levels. Thus, black principals are up from 12 to 24% of the district total in that category, while Hispanic principals are up from none in 1971 to 10.3% in 1978. A similar pattern exists for teachers, with the proportion of blacks up from 7.7% to 13.2 and of Hispanics from 2.7% to 7.8. Perhaps these changes toward greater minority representation may have something to do with the decreasing incidence of vandalism in the schools. People in the communities may perceive schools with increasing numbers of minority educators as more "legitimate" than they were seen before. And as we already discussed, activist parent groups and anti-poverty agencies representing minority interests have been successful in this district in their efforts to have more minority educators appointed.

CHAPTER 5: District D

Ethnically and economically mixed. Formerly white middle and working class district (mainly Jewish and Catholic) that has undergone a marked ethnic succession since decentralization, continuing trends from earlier decades. South to north migration, with big influx of Hispanics and exodus of whites.

Professionalism ideology prevails in the running of the district. CSBs have delegated much administrative and policy authority to their strong superintendent. Their outlook and his fit the ethos of the liberal, middle and upper middle class populations in the northern part of the district, as the CSB has had disproportionate representation from this area.

An infra-structure of parent and community organizations existing before decentralization has helped solidify district-community relations. The superintendent has actively built on the support of these organizations through an effective community relations-outreach effort. Moreover, the UFT and CSA are part of that support structure, with the district's parent-educator coalition as one of the strongest in the city. Has led to much political stability except for Hispanic insurgency over the past year, its future course depending on strategies of the superintendent and the Hispanic leadership.

Management style of this strong superintendent has included: (1) his taking on policy as well as administrative authority; (2) his explicit educational philosophy, emphasizing individualized instruction, humanistic, open education; (3) his development of a highly professional colleague group of district office staff and principals who share that philosophy and collaborate in implementing it in many schools and subject areas; (4) his further development of an informal, yet systematic and organized set of administrative procedures of monitoring that implementation; (5) his strong support of the district's educators, including extensive staff development efforts; and (6) his equally extensive actions to generate strong community support for district programs. Charismatic style, strong aggressive salesmanship in which the district's "products" constantly displayed and sold in public meetings.

In brief, a strong superintendent district, with supportive CSB, and with the district having developed many creative, new programs that have maintained student performance levels despite vast changes in enrollment. Hispanic leaders' criticisms of the unrepresentative nature of the CSB, the ethnic homogeneity of district staff (reflecting a policy of much recruitment from within), and what they regard as limited bilingual program initiatives are the only source of significant political conflict. Other conflicts, as between parochial and public school interests on zoning and integration, etc., have generally been managed with a minimum of disruption. No serious racial problems, as blacks have been integrated into schools and district staff and parent organizations.

Our next district is in an outer borough, in an area with a population of over 300,000, that had been fairly stable demographically and thereby insulated from changes going on elsewhere in the city until the 1960s and 70s, when it lost many white middle class residents and experienced a big influx of poor Hispanics. Prior to these demographic changes, it included a series of white working and lower middle class communities to the south and east (mostly Irish and Italian), living in old 2 and 3 family dwellings and row houses and some tenements and apartments. To the north and west, a more middle and upper middle class population resided in cooperative apartments, middle income and luxury buildings, and some large homes. The district's Jewish population was concentrated in these communities, with many Catholics living nearby, usually in more modest circumstances.

The biggest ethnic changes have taken place in south and east. Many whites moved out of these areas over the past 10-15 years, with poor Hispanics moving in. The in-migration was, in turn, accelerated by (a) the burning of the poverty area to the south, whose decaying buildings have been subjected to widespread arson; and (b) the development of a massive, middle income community in the northeast. The latter attracted many whites (especially middle aged and elderly) from the area immediately south of the district, and thereby speeding the northern migration of poor Hispanics. Meanwhile, neighboring communities in the north have remained fairly stable though they, too, have experienced an influx of poor, minority residents on their south and east fringes.

T e district's eputation for having good schools has [illegible] ed to thi in-migration f Hispanics, as their children starte [illegible] in great umbers in the 970s. Most were at least living in t [illegible] but so who lived o side tried to attend its schools as we [illegible] st import t, the forme y white ethnic communities in which th [illegible] panics settle soon became most an extension of the slums to the [illegible] were a eas with alre ly deteriorating housing, and it conti [illegible] iorate.

T public scho population has reflected these demog [illegible]. Since centralizati began in 1970, whites have declined total rollment to %, having been close to 75% in the ea Hispan s, by contra , increased from 27% to over 50%. M new Hi anic student are from overwhelmingly low income f with t middle clas whites who have left, with the perce from f ilies receiv g AFDC (welfare families) increasing over 5 .

I addition, en llment has increased from 18,000 at decent lization to ughly 30,000 now, imposing a severe condit n in the sout ern area schools where rates of utili often 0% or more. n fact, the district has one of the hi zation ates in the c ty and has had the biggest enrollment since 80 of any dis rict. Many of the overcrowded minorit the so h have new an exes to absorb some of the overflow, a student have been b sed up to underutilized, northern area fairly xtensive inte ration program, but the overcrowding s There d been some s rious racial incidents in lower middle ethnic reas through hich minority students had been busse use of annexes in recent years has probably minimized some of these problems.

The superintendent and his board have complained that the Board of Education has often short-changed the district because of a lag in funding adjustments to catch up with enrollment changes. There have been some years, for example, in which total enrollment has increased by 2,000, with many new students suddenly appearing in September without warning, and without the district having the staff or space to adequately serve them. Better forecasting from the central board and/or its acceptance of district forecasts which tended to be based on a more realistic view of the population changes it had to confront would have helped. As the superintendent explained: "Their allocation formula was inequitable. They gave money on last year's register. We are among the few growing districts and couldn't get money for our additional students. Last year [1979] was the first in which they tried to tie the district allocations to the most recent register. I had been telling them to do that for years."

The one stable student population are the blacks. They constituted 22% of the district's enrollment in 1970 and are now about 25%. Many live in the northern areas and have not faced the problems that Hispanics have. There is a substantial black working and middle class in these areas that has been absorbed into the district without that many problems. There have been some zoning controversies, and some of the early bussing of blacks had created incidents in white ethnic areas but, by and large, racial conflict within this district is minimal. Moreover, the district does have four black principals and some blacks in district office staff positions, all of the latter highly trained and professional, and that seems to have provided some indication to blacks of its commitments to hire competent minorities. By contrast, there are no Hispanic principals, and while there are some Hispanics in the district office, city-wide and borough-based Hispanic leaders have staged many protests against what they regard as the district's limited effort at opening up supervisory and district office positions for their group.

Political Context of Decentralization - When community control became an issue in the 1960s, there was much apprehension in this district, both among educators and parents. UFT officials report that roughly 5,000 members of their union lived in the district at that time, most of them in the northern part as they did in other middle class areas of the city, and they didn't want decentralization. Furthermore, they were joined in this view by many organized parent groups who didn't have the resentment about the public schools that parent and community groups had in minority areas. There were some old-line principals they didn't like, but that was a relatively trivial concern, relative to the burning anger that existed elsewhere. And among New York City educators, this was long regarded as a favored place in which to work, with many high achieving students, cooperative parents, and little community protest activity.

Long before decentralization, the superintendent in the district, as well as the local UFT representative, had developed a very well-organized network of both parents and civic organizations to work closely with the schools in support of public education. As a UFT official reported: "By 1965, we had organized the schools in this district and didn't have much more to do. One of the UFT officers suggested: 'Get relationships established with parents, with the superintendent, with the community, and civic organizations.' So we went ahead and did that. We had this alliance all set up before decentralization took place and it has been like that ever since."

A district-wide Educational Forum of parents and principals had been established in 1950 to discuss educational issues, and there also existed a council of parent association presidents representing the schools. Unlike in many other districts at the onset of decentralization, there thus existed in this one a close alliance between parents and educators, both of whom opposed the change as irrelevant to their district.* A top district administrator and curriculum specialist explained the sentiment at the time decentralization was being debated: "When decentralization became an issue, I was one of those people who went up and down the five boroughs talking against it. I was afraid that it would do away with the examination system and that only ethnic criteria would be used in appointing teachers and principals. I have since changed my mind, and we are prototype here. We had the ingredients: a strong and committed staff, a strong superintendent, and parents in the community who were involved."

Thus, though decentralization looked to parents and educators in this district as a reform that was perhaps needed elsewhere but certainly not for their area, once it came, they changed their approach. Rather than continue to fight it, as they had before, the professional staff geared up the district office to try to take advantage of the new flexibilities it seemed to provide. Working with the strong support of parents and community leaders in the alliance referred to above, the professionals undertook many educational improvement efforts that were to give this district a reputation within the city and state as one of the most effective in program terms of any in New York City under decentralization. Indeed, it reflected the effectiveness of a strong superintendent district, supported by a "professionalism" oriented CSB.

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* Staten Island and the middle class district of Brooklyn reported on earlier were in a similar situation, along with some of the Queens districts that we did not study.

CSBs - The CSBs elected in this district have reflected the local power structure, as they have in others. Up to 7 or 8 of the 9 CSB members have generally been from the most affluent and white middle class areas in the northern end of the district, and they have themselves been a predominantly white, professional, highly educated, and well-to-do group. There has never been a black member and there have only been two Hispanics, one on the 1975 elected board and one more on the 1980 board. The reason for this unrepresentativeness is the same as in other districts, namely that residents in middle class areas vote in disproportionate numbers while the turnout is very small in poor, minority areas. Also, the UFT has reinforced this pattern, given its active efforts to get out the vote among the 5,000 UFT members who live in that northern area. Thus, the 1973 board, for example, included a college professor, a university administrator, the wife of a prominent Supreme Court judge who was herself a top official in the Liberal Party as well as a parent leader in the district, and other prominent northern area residents. As one of their members explained: "The school board was not then and is not now economically, ethnically, or locationally representative of the district. It is now a group of professionals who have an average family income of about $50,000 in a district where the average income of residents is about $12,000. There are no black or Hispanic board members in a district where the student population is about 78% black and Hispanic. 8 of the 9 board members live in the north. The board members are all very intelligent. Many are teachers or have had teaching experience."

This group of white, professional middle and upper middle class board members has consistently played much more of a "buffer" role in relation to its superintendent, deferring to his "professional" judgments, than it has a "representational" role that might reflect particular constituency pressures and interests. The majority of this board had a more "public" than "private" regarding ethos, reflecting their good government, reform outlook. They have tended to be more interested in supporting broad educational improvements for the district than in responding to demands from particular interest groups (e.g., for more representation, ethnic appointments, and favored treatment). Moreover, all the CSB presidents since 1970, with one exception, took the position that their superintendent was the education leader of the district, that they should respect his educational philosophy and judgments, and that they should support him strongly. One of the board presidents was a parent and Bronx county leader in the Liberal Party, and she almost never used her vast political connections for any purpose other than to bring more money and programs into the district. Another was a college professor and active member of the academic freedom committee of the New York Civil Liberties Union. He had very strong views that politics should never intrude in professional education decisions of superintendents, especially, in this case, the politics of a community school board.

In brief, this was a CSB that delegated considerable administrative authority (policy as well) to its superintendent, that had much internal consensus on that role definition, and that consequently developed much role consensus with its superintendent as well, regarding their respective spheres of authority. As decentralization proceeded, it tended generally to groom and recruit for new members people of similar outlook. Thus, when one of its members, the college professor who believed strongly in protecting the superintendent from outside political interference, got appointed to the central board where, incidentally, he played a similar role in resisting Mayor Koch's attempts to put in his own Chancellor, the district had appointed as his successor a physician who shared the superintendent's educational philosophy and protected him in similar fashion. And until 1977, when the CSB got a couple of new members who joined with one old one in pressing for more board influence over policy, the votes had consistently been near unanimous in support of the superintendent's positions on budget, staffing, program, and other issues. In fact, even in the period from 1977 to 1980, when these three dissenting board members did become more vocal, a majority still supported the superintendent and essentially "froze out" this smaller group. The support for the superintendent was so great that even some of its Catholic members, including the CSB president of 1979 and 1980, supported the superintendent and the district's strong public school coalition by abstaining when issues supported by the church -- for example, the Moynihan Packwood Bill for free tuition for private and parochial schools -- came up for vote. The fact that the district's more middle class and affluent northern area population voted in much greater numbers in CSB elections than the low income minority populations to the south made it possible for them to keep perpetuating themselves and their point of view. The result was that this district emerged with a strong superintendent and a supportive board that deferred to him on many district decisions, both policy and administrative.

In order to understand how the CSBs maintained this common outlook, supporting their strong superintendent, it is important to describe briefly the interest groups that have been active in elections and in the district's educational politics. Since decentralization began, there have been two main slates of candidates representing the two broad coalitions in the district. One is the UFT-CSA-PA slate, representing the parent-educator coalition. A top union official has referred to it as "the Consumers' Union of this district", and it clearly has as members the most powerful parent and educator groups. Board members and parent and community leaders acknowledge that it is by far the most powerful coalition, and they characterize it as "the majority slate", "the core of the district", "the people who run the district." While one doesn't have to be endorsed by this group to get elected to the CSB, it certainly helps, and 5 or 6 CSB members are usually from among its top candidates. It is dominated by people from the northern end of the district, many of them having been involved in public school affairs since before decentralization.

The other main slate is the parochial school one, sponsored through the district's many parishes. This is a Catholic group that has been particularly concerned with neighborhood stabilization in the area and it represents 18 parishes in the district. Since the district is roughly 58% Catholic, this coalition has understandably wanted to have its interests represented in district decisions. In addition to pressing to have parochial schools get their share of Title I funds, this group has pursued many other issues on which the church has strong positions. They include having more discipline in the schools, making prayer part of the curriculum, eliminating sex education in the schools, opposing many desegregation programs, and having homosexual teachers removed.

This Catholic coalition has usually been successful in getting a few of its top candidates elected, and relations between the district and its Catholic leadership have generally been harmonious. Some of the Catholic leadership have felt left out of the inner councils within the district, regarding themselves as the "outs" against an "insider" group that includes teachers and parents from the northern area. Some have been particularly upset that Catholics who have been elected later sided with the majority and did not support church positions on some of these "value" issues mentioned above. Nevertheless, the CSB and superintendent have always provided funds to parochial schools to their satisfaction, as prescribed by law, and the conservative church positions on the other issues have not been that much of a focus for debate.

In fact, in a move to develop even greater consensus than already existed, two CSB members, including a Catholic who was then president, approached a Clergy Conference leader in 1977 in a plea for unity. "He has promised two of my colleagues that there would not be a parochial slate in 1977," explained a Catholic CSB member, "but apparently there were still enough clergy and other Catholic leaders who felt there should continue to be such a slate." Nevertheless, the district has maintained a harmonious relationship with Catholic groups, and there is very little undercurrent of conflict between them. "There is a good relationship between the district and the parishes," explained a CSB member. "The superintendent made every effort to keep them on his side." It is likely that the Catholic leadership kept up its own slate, not so much because it felt short-changed by district decisions, but rather to maintain some semblance of an "independent" voice, even though they realized that it might not be that necessary or possible. It may well have been to try to counter the common pattern within the CSB of its Catholic members siding on many occasions with the majority.

The only other district-wide slate, and it lasted a very short time, was an "outsider" group that was formed mainly to try to counter the power of the parent-teacher alliance. The latter had always had strong support from the Regular Democrats, and the new group was formed by an assistant to one of the district's leading Reform Democrat politicians. As one of its leaders explained: "This was formed to bring together various groups that felt excluded from the decision making process: Reform politicians, some Blacks, Hispanics, and parochial school people." This group was of little consequence, however, in the actual election.

The politics of the district may thus be characterized as a fairly stable one, with a large, well-organized majority in control and a fragmented series of less powerful groups periodically trying to shape district decisions and having minimal success. Often, the majority coalition would seek to include one or more of these "outside" groups in the district network but there always remained some groups who defined themselves as outsiders. One inside observer of district politics summarized this politics quite well: "The district is run by the superintendent. There is no clear-cut conflict between the superintendent and the board. But there is a basic conflict between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. The 'insiders' are the superintendent, his professional staff, the majority faction on the CSB, the UFT, the CSA, and the parents of past and present students. This group is in complete control of the district. The 'outsiders' present occasional disruptions, but are unable to challenge the entrenched group. The 'outsiders' are a noncohesive group including various groups excluded from the decision making process. They represent various interests -- reform politics, Blacks, Hispanics, and parochial school supporters. Each group rises and falls on its particular narrow issues."

CSB - Superintendent Relations - Little more need be said, then, about relations between the superintendent and his CSB except to acknowledge that he is by far one of the most powerful superintendents in the city in his own district. He can literally set policy on many educational issues, mainly because his CSB has so much confidence in his professional judgment and integrity. And over the years, strong CSB presidents have always been able to keep potential dissidents in line. Until 1977, that has rarely been necessary, as the board almost unanimously supported the superintendent in his decisions. As one top district office staff person summarized quite succinctly: "He is a pro, and the CSB go along with his educational judgments and leadership." An active CSB member embellished on these points in a way that provided even more clarity as to the relationship: "The superintendent doesn't cater to the board. He does what he feels is right. He is not afraid to tell off board members, and he has told off three of them on this board when they wanted to challenge him. A superintendent can't kow tow to the board. And the board should be a part-time board and not constantly stick their noses in education matters. He and his excellent staff have the expertise on education matters." Another board member noted: "I don't see him as an employee." Still another explained: "He has to be the chief education officer in the district, in charge of curriculum, the selection of principals, etc. I never want to get into matters of finance, and we certainly should not usurp the superintendent's authority to select principals and other educational staff. He makes it clear that he won't be cowed. I know that there are some new board members who would like to curb his powers, but he won't take it. He tells them that he will only serve on his terms or they can get another superintendent if they can muster the votes to terminate him. He always wins on this."

Until 1977, there was little about this relationship that bothered the CSB, with the exception of perhaps one member. That person was joined by two others and for a time a third who were elected to the board for the first time, and felt that the board had a more active role than it was playing. These members did not question the superintendent's competence as an educator and administrator, by and large, but were mainly concerned with redressing what they regarded as an imbalance in the relationship, where they saw the superintendent as running the board. Two of the three were clearly "outsiders" in terms of the network of influential groups -- e.g., the parent-teacher alliance -- and the third was an independent PA president from one of the northern area schools. She soon sided with the majority. One of the new board members was active in trying to get more Hispanics selected as principals and became outspoken at public board meetings, as we will discuss below when we review the issue of Hispanic insurgency. His style was so alien to the majority of board members and to the main organized interest groups in the district that he soon became politically isolated, with even some of the others in the dissenting group being unwilling to support his actions, at least in public. As one of the top district office staff people explained:" "We adopt the middle class compromise approach, and we assume you can get people to cooperate." It was clear that this activist board member's style was not of that nature, and it did not win him any support on the board, let alone among the organized educator and parent groups.

Those dissenting groups tried hard for a while to increase the CSB's power in the district. Though they lost in this first encounter, it remains to be seen what may happen in the future. Their comments about the relationship reveal the main concerns they had felt. "In this district," reported one of them, "the superintendent sets the policy and the CSB rubber stamps it. This is the first CSB to show any independence." Another observed: "The Superintendent boasts that he can determine policy 99% of the time, and he's right." Still another noted: "He is an excellent superintendent, perhaps the best in the city. I only resent the closed decision making process." Still a fourth reported: "In this district, the CSB leaves educational policy to him. He is an excellent superintendent and the district runs well. But the older board members have abdicated their authority to him."

The issue for most of this dissenting group, then, was not the superintendent's competence but the power imbalance that they felt was inappropriate for a decentralized community school district. As one of them aptly summarized their position: "I have visited 15 or 16 school districts and ours is the least decentralized. By decentralization, I thought that CSBs were created as policy making bodies. Perhaps we have a weak role because we have one of the stronger superintendents in the city."

The way in which the superintendency evolved in this district in the early stages of decentralization provides some insight into the present situation. The present superintendent is the second the district has had since decentralization, having been selected in 1972. In keeping with the experience of several community school districts, his predecessor, an old-style superintendent, chose early retirement rather than continue to serve under a new, decentralized system that made him vulnerable to CSB and other lay group pressures. He had been assigned to this district in the late 1960s, as a quiet place in which to serve out his time until retirement, after having been under tremendous criticism from militant community groups in the minority district where he had served before. The CSB in this district had asked him to stay on as its superintendent, but the increasing pressures from even that community were strong enough to hasten his retirement.

His successor, one of his special assistants, had served in the district for over twenty years as a teacher, a curriculum coordinator, program director, and for a while, as an assistant principal; and he turned out to have many of the qualities that the CSB and its successors sought. He was a trained educator, knew the district and its problems, had a wide network of educator colleagues within the district with whom he had worked; and he had strong skills in administration, politics, and interpersonal relations that gave the district kind of leadership his predecessor did not provide. A very charismatic and outgoing person, he related easily to parent and community groups, to students, and to his fellow educators and soon gained tremendous respect and support from groups throughout the district.

He soon defined his role as one of policy maker for the district, and not just that of the district's top administrator, carrying out CSB policy. And this superintendent's charisma and political and interpersonal skills enabled him to maintain the pattern until some of the new dissenting members of the CSB began questioning his authority and a flurry of political insurgency developed over the appointment of Hispanic principals and over bilingual programs that we will discuss below.

MANAGEMENT STYLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Since 1972, this superintendent has articulated an educational philosophy of the district, developed a highly professional district office and supervisory staff, initiated and effectively implemented many new programs in collaboration with them, built an informal but nevertheless strong administrative support structure for the programs, maintained close relations with the teachers, supervisors, and their unions, and reinforced the programs through an extensive network of parent and community organizations. The district has developed into one of the most productive in the city, as a result of this leadership, putting together programs, curriculum bulletins, and staff development efforts that often went far beyond anything headquarters had done. It has been an impressive effort that indicates the many educational improvement possibilities that decentralization can facilitate, when local conditions are right, and when given needed political support city-wide.

At the same time, the superintendent and CSB had been vulnerable to political protest from spokesmen for new groups who have felt left out. While that protest has little to do with educational programs, with the exception of bilingual ones, it has the potential to undercut some of the effective initiatives the district has taken under decentralization.

(1) CURRICULUM STYLE - The superintendent in this district, probably more than his counterparts in any other district we studied, has developed an explicit education philosophy that has continuously guided his many initiatives in improving education there. The philsophy is one of what he and his staff refer to as humanistic, open education. It places much emphasis on individualized approaches to instruction, on experience-based learning, on non-traditional classrooms and learning contexts, and on the affective as well as cognitive-intellectual development of the child. It has been shaped by the superintendent's enthusiasm for John Dewey's concepts, for open education, and for alternative schools. It is a philosophy that stresses informality and flexibility in curriculum and school practices. It also stresses the importance of participation of teachers, students, and parents as well as principals in the development of curriculum and policy within schools. And there is much emphasis on creating a school and district office climate that will release the creativity of educators and parents as well as students.

While not every school and program reflect this philosophy, a great many of them do, and there is in that sense a unified, coherent approach to education in this district that distinguishes it from most others. One contributing factor to this coherence has been the staffing strategy of the superintendent. He has gathered around him a group of administrative and curriculum staff in the district office and supervisors in the schools who have agreed with his educational philosophy and helped him apply it. Since he became superintendent in 1972, 18 principalships have become vacant, most as a result of retirements, and he has filled those positions with educators from within the district, former APs in most cases, who had been colleagues for many years. The same can be said of his district office staff. To illustrate, the 6 top district office professionals, including the superintendent, have been in that position an average of almost 12 years and in the district itself an average of 15. No other district we studied comes close to this in the extent of staff continuity, and such continuity has been critical in supporting the superintendent's initiatives in developing a district-wide educational approach. These people have such close, collegial relations that they function almost like a family. "We go back a long way with each other," one of them explained, "and we have built up a very close informal relation with one another."

The main curriculum and program initiatives the superintendent and his staff have developed include experimental junior high schools and programs within them; extensive open education programs; learning centers and resource rooms in schools; considerable integration between reimbursable and tax levy programs; major district-office initiated programs in reading, early childhood, science, math, the arts, health education, drug prevention, career education, and bilingual education; principals' conferences in schools that are more than the usual monthly meetings; school-based and district-wide parent-teacher curriculum committees; and the development of scores of programs and curriculum bulletins on such diverse topics as energy, the space program, the criminal justice system, reading and many others.

Some of the junior high school programs are among the most dramatic and impressive. One of the most effective of these programs that became a prototype for several others within the district has been at a predominantly black and Hispanic school. Located in a desolated, bombed-out area in the southernmost section of the district, this school had some of the most severe problems of a typical ghetto junior high -- low reading and math scores, high rates of truancy, severe discipline problems, low teacher morale, and much student and community hostility toward the school and its principal. The principal was a traditional pedagogue who was unable to function effectively in such a setting; and the school's physical plant had been allowed to deteriorate, for whatever combination of reasons, to a point that only further alienated the students. Students and other local youth were reportedly so angry about the school in the late 1960s and early 70s that they had begun shooting pellets and bee bees through the windows of the principal's office. At that point, the principal began fearing for her well being, and it was clear that she was going to have to retire from the school.

The present superintendent went into the school in 1972, sat down with the students, got a sense of what their complaints were, and set in motion several changes that not only reversed its decline but established a model program that later got transferred to other JHSs in the district. Acknowledging the community's desire to have a minority principal, he first urged one of the APs, a white Orthodox Jew, to become the interim, acting principal until he could find a minority one. That principal, working closely with several creative teachers, soon put together a non-departmentalized, student-centered, individualized program that developed in the students a more positive attitude toward the school. He and his teachers created a "family-type" atmosphere in the classroom by personalizing teacher-student relations; and teachers developed close contacts with the student's home.

The superintendent's account of his early contacts with the school reveals what conditions were like and what the educational philosophy was that helped move the school in a more positive direction: "I sat down with the student organization," he recalled, "and asked them how I could be of help. One student sat back, and said: 'You're asking us how you can help when the fuckin' ceiling and roof are caving in? You must be crazy.' We were all shocked, but we kept at it with them. We brought in a few new staff and I put the AP in as acting principal, and in six months, it was turned from a terror camp into a good school. It would never have been done without him. At first, he turned me down, because he felt he wouldn't be accepted as a white, and shouldn't I get a black or Puerto Rican, but I said: 'You take it for now, while I look around, but we have to get going.' After 6 months, the kids and parents in that school voted him in unanimously. These kids have to have somebody to identify with who they know cares about them. They had been adults before, had lived with women, and we turned them into kids again. It used to be that in the elementary schools they taught children and in the junior high schools they taught subjects. We have to treat these junior high school kids like people also."

Treating these students in a caring and humane fashion, in a non-traditional classroom setting where all subjects were taught by the same few teachers was probably a key to the success of the program. The program involved eliminating specialized subject area departments and providing more of a "community" climate for students by keeping them in the same classroom setting, with the same teachers for all subjects. There were, in addition, many out of classroom learning experiences, involving frequent trips to plays, movies, and museums...One of the highlights of the school year in this regard is a 2-week trip to a YMCA camp in the Catskills Mountain area northwest of the city. Teachers accompany the students there without extra pay and conduct programs in environmental education and sensitivity training.

In 1976, three years after this program was in operation, the school began a second one along similar lines, and also developed at the initiative of some of its creative teachers. It is another alternative, mini-school program that develops a curriculum around student interest, emphasizing reading and math skills through an individualized approach. The same "community" and "family" climate of the original program exist in this one.

As the principal explained in commenting on the programs: Both were developed mainly by our teachers, some of whom were dissatisfied with traditional teaching and curriculum. We developed a kid-centered system with these programs. The problem in our schools is that there is no sense of community or family in them. These new alternative programs developed that sense. And now every junior high school in the district has some type of program like we have here.

The results from these programs are quite positive. Thus, students' participating in the first have averaged a gain of 2 years in reading scores by the end of the school year. Meanwhile, students in the second gained 2.2. in their reading scores, and those in both have a consistent record of better than 90% daily attendance. Though there are only a couple of hundred students in both programs, reading scores of the entire school have improved steadily since 1973. Those of 9th graders, for example, went up from 6.6 in 1973 to 8.0 in 1978. Those of 8th graders from 5.9 to 7.4

during that period, and of 7th graders from 5.2 to 6.6.

The program has now been extended to several other junior high schools in the district and to some elementary ones as well. These developments are a direct result of initiatives taken by the superintendent and his staff, as they saw how successfully the program worked out in the first school, as well as in response to requests from other principals as they, too, saw the results. It is our sense that such alternative, mini-school programs that meet so many of the needs of low achieving, "turned off" minority students are a direct result in this district, as they have been in others, of the district's educators taking advantage of their program and staffing flexibility under decentralization. As the principal of this school explained in the context of his long experience in the New York City school system: "Without decentralization, who would have supported this type of program that we now have in every junior high school in the district. The central board at headquarters never had such an interest."

Open education programs have been similarly extensive throughout the district. The superintendent and his staff initiated a wall-less, open education school where the principal and teachers developed a school-wide program that had similarly positive results, and many elementary schools have adopted open education approaches to learning as well. "We have 4,000 kids in open education," the superintendent reported in 1978, "and we trained all the teachers." Given the values of many parents, particularly in the northern area of the district, such programs clearly fit with their preferences, and they worked in poverty area schools as well.

Unfortunately for the district, central board staffing directives, forced on the system without its having any control over the situation, decimated its open education program. Because of budget cutbacks, districts have had to eliminate many teaching positions, as teachers have had to be "excessed" out on the basis of seniority. Open education teachers have tended to be the ones with the least seniority and are therefore among the first to have to leave. In addition, the federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has required that New York City desegregate its teaching staff causing even more turnover among open education teachers. These developments have hit the district very hard but it has continued its efforts to keep up as many open education programs as it could, given the demand for them in many schools.

The district has undertaken many other program initiatives as well. It has learning centers and resource rooms within many schools, for example, for its early childhood programs and for various subjects like math and science. It has an audio-visual resource center within the district offices as well as one with extensive materials for programs geared toward gifted and talented students, with a special section geared to bilingual gifted and talented students.

Still another significant program strategy within the district has been its integration of state and federally-funded programs with city-funded, tax levy ones. One of the weaknesses of many districts is that they do not coordinate these programs, but this one has done so in a productive way for many years. It uses state and federal funds to develop new programs that fill in gaps from locally-funded ones; and it then institutionalizes those state and federally-funded programs that work by making them a regular part of city-funded efforts. While this is how such outside funding is meant to be used, it often doesn't happen that way elsewhere. Moreover, it integrates as many state and federally-funded programs as well. As this district's able deputy superintendent in charge of that funding explained: "We have conceived of our reimbursable programs and city tax levy ones, not as separate and apart, but as part of an integrated approach in terms of a curriculum and program strategy. And the superintendent's management style ties into that. For example, we never had a separate coordinator for Title I, PSEN (a state program for students with special education needs), etc. We were one of the first districts that had one person in charge of all reimbursable instead of fragmenting them. Our strategy is to look at our programs as a totality and have an intermeshing of funding efforts. Out of that came creative programs -- Title I, PSEN, tax levy, all complementing and reinforcing each other. Programs were never fragmented here."

One of the major strengths of the district's education programs has been its highly professional staff of curriculum coordinators (directors) who the superintendent recruited, and who collaborate extensively among themselves. These people all share the superintendent's educational philosophy, and they are very active in initiating new programs for schools, providing technical assistance and support services, and informing principals of developments in their fields that might be incorporated within the schools. One apt illustration of how professionally competent and effective these coordinators are is in the many activities of the one in science. Recruited by the superintendent from another district where he was an outstanding teacher, this coordinator has helped the schools develop a very extensive science curriculum. He set up a science room in one elementary school with its own mini-computer; he has a living science program in three classrooms at another elementary school that have a variety of animals and plants; he runs extensive programs outside, at city park and cultural agencies; he spent a couple of weeks with NASA staff in Maryland and developed NASA and aerospace classes in several schools; he set up 13 planetariums in schools throughout the district; he integrates many of his science programs with basic skills instruction in reading and math; and he has science cluster teachers who work in special rooms in schools with various science materials. The net result of all this activity is that the district has an exceptionally enriched curriculum in his area in which he is constantly working to set up model programs in one or a few schools and encourage their spread in others. And most important, he does a lot of this in the context of the open education, experience-based learning techniques of the superintendent and other district staff. Some of his summary comments indicate a general district philosophy and style that he reflects so well: "We are service people," he explained, "and we are here to help teachers teach. We can't get much help from central on curriculum, because things are moving too quickly in science, and headquarters doesn't have the staff to keep up with them. Most of all they don't have the flexibility either that we have. They don't know our local capabilities and needs. If I want to do something in the district that I think is good, I go to a principal and say: 'I have a great idea. Are you interested? Would you like to give this a whirl?' And that is how many of our science initiatives have begun in this district. Basically, principals make their own curriculum decisions here. We are service people and can only point to certain things that may be useful and exciting for kids...My sense of how to motivate kids and how they learn is that you do it with something concrete that grabs them. That is how we work in this district in integrating what we do in several subjects. It is the best way, I believe, to teach reading. We get the kids involved in rocketry, for example, and they soon start reading a lot about it. Get them involved in dinosaurs or stars, and they become greedy for books. Kids are into what is current, and we start with where they are in terms of interest...Also, we are into hands-on learning where we get the kids to experience as much as they can through direct hands-on programs. And we have a crackerjack curriculum staff in the district office who agree with that philosophy. I work with all of them, the early childhood people, the math person, the reading person, and so on."

Several aspects of the superintendent's management style are thus evident from this single case. The curriculum coordinators are given much autonomy and flexibility. They work very closely with one another, building on each other's materials. They function as service providers to the schools and give much technical assistance to principals and teachers. And they usually work within an open education philosophy that guides so many of the programs of the district. A big part of the reason for the superintendent delegating as much as he does to them is that he has already recruited them on the basis of their commitment to this philosophy and of their capacity to work within that framework. While he keeps in close touch with what the coordinators are doing, he knows that they are developing programs in line with the educational philosophy and strategies he has set for the district.

Still other initiatives the superintendent has undertaken relate to the professional development of principals and teachers. He meets monthly with the principals, for example, and holds most of those meetings in particular schools where model programs exist. He also follows a strategy of peer support, with principals helping one another, as each takes turns in hosting a session at his or her school and helps in possibly having a problem that works well there adopted elsewhere. "We have principals' conferences at schools, in small groups," explained the superintendent, "so it gets to be more a living thing and not just discussions around a table. That is being done now at the assistant principal level as well."

There is great emphasis in the district on releasing the creativity of staff as well as students, and that central feature of the superintendent's style relates directly to his professional development efforts with principals. Rather than imposing particular programs on the principals or visiting their schools unannounced and in an explicitly controlling posture, the superintendent makes very clear to them his interest in helping them with school problems, as they see them. Having already screened these principals himself and groomed them for many years while they were APs within the district, the superintendent doesn't need to monitor them in any formal way. He gives them much autonomy and he encourages them to treat their teachers with the same supportive style that he uses. "I have told principals that they have to release teacher creativity like I do with them," he explained. "That means that they should sit down with different groups of teachers, ask them their problems, and work with them on those problems. I trained our principals to do that."

Another important strategy the superintendent uses to encourage educational improvement activities among principals is to provide incentive grants from the district office for innovative programs. To qualify for such funds, the principals must indicate explicitly their school development plans and how the program, whose financial support they are applying for, fits with those plans. This is a technique, then, to encourage more program innovation in the schools, in the context of better planning, and in a way that makes visible to the superintendent how each principal is performing on those dimensions. It soon becomes apparent, for example, both to the superintendent and to the principals involved which ones are doing effective planning and which are not, and for the latter, the visibility of their limited efforts becomes in itself an incentive to improve.

Teacher in-service training is equally extensive in the district. The curriculum coordinators do a lot of that in every major subject, and the district office serves as a valued resource for many teachers who come there after school to review curriculum materials, meet in small groups, and write proposals. "We have teachers in and out of here all summer," a top district office staff person reported, "writing mini-grants. We encourage them as do their principals to develop programs."

The superintendent has, in turn, extended this participative style to parents and students as well. There are parent-teacher committees, developing curriculum bulletins in many schools, and there is a district-wide parent curriculum committee as well. As a district office staff person explained: "These committees and workshops started in 1977 as almost a grass roots movement. An example of parent input is the program on sexism designed by the district office. At one school, the parents did not like the original tone and direction, so they changed it to meet their needs to a degree that it eventually conveyed a totally different concept." In addition to getting some parent input, these committees are an important vehicle for the principal to explain school programs to parents, to secure their support.

Students are also given a role in district programs. Reflecting the superintendent's philosophy, he his staff have actively encouraged schools to set up student organizations in every school, from kindergarten on up, and in several cases, student input has made a difference. As the superintendent noted: "I have met with students since 1972, and they have had a big impact on the district. Teachers sat in on many of those meetings, because some of them were afraid that students would delve into personalities and be critical of them. Students have been instrumental, for example, in changing the social studies curriculum. They said that social studies was dull, old stuff that was not relevant, and I had them suggest what they wanted. Since I feel history is very important, it was obvious that we weren't teaching it well, because it wasn't getting across. I have even asked the kids in a kindergarten class what was wrong with their school. In one school we had a complaint that the security guards and others in the school were very mean and we made some changes. In others we had doors put on toilets and required vendors to come with garbage cans so the yard wouldn't be littered. Ths students feel they have some say in how the school is run."

In sum, this is a district that has developed a highly professional cadre of staff, under the able leadership of a strong superintendent; and they have demonstrated the many possibilities of decentralization. Their curriculum materials, their staff training, and their integrated approach to educational improvement, within the context of a well-developed and agreed-upon educational philosophy, are quite exemplary for any community school district. Few districts can point to such a professional operation.

(2) THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE SCHOOLS - As already indicated, the district office has maintained close relationships with the schools. The superintendent is always well-informed as to what is going on in each school, through his staff and well-developed network of parents, UFT reps, and community leaders. There is much monitoring and evaluation in that sense of school programs. And there is also much technical assistance from the district office, as various curriculum coordinators, community relations staff, and the superintendent himself meet regularly with principals and teachers in individual schools.

Districts vary, as we have indicated, in the extent of school level autonomy. Some give much autonomy to schools to establish an educational philosophy and programs, while others give less so. While there is certainly much school level autonomy in this district, it exists under the strong, though informal, leadership of the superintendent. Thus, one of his main initiatives under decentralization has been to replace the 18 principals who have retired since decentralization with APs from within the district, usually of his choice and then ratified by the CSB and parents, and often chosen not only for their professional qualifications, but also because their educational philosophy was simliar to his. In fact, it is by having the authority to select principals that he has been able to develop the unified educational program that he has. To the extent that he is able to select principals whose educational philosophy matches his and that of his staff, he has people he and his staff can work with productively, and everyone benefits as a result, particularly the students. The other side of the coin, however, is that he is left vulnerable to charges that he is engaging in "in-breeding" and that he is not very open to outsiders in principal positions. And that has become an issue in the Hispanic protest that we will describe below.

The district's schools are autonomous, then, within this context. The superintendent does delegate authority to his principals, but it takes place only after he has exerted a strong influence over their selection. His subsequent style of monitoring and technical assistance is then a "collegial" rather than "bureaucratic, authority" one, with principals and teachers treated as fellow professionals and respected for their professionalism. Within this context, the district office functions as a service agency, and its monitoring and evaluation are non-bureaucratic in style.

In regard to monitoring, for example, a non-threatening tone has always existed in relations between district office staff and principals. The emphasis is much more on how the superintendent can help them than in measuring or otherwise assessing how closely they are complying with district directives. They are usually informed in advance of impending visits by the superintendent, and he and his staff never use any formal checklists or other procedures for evaluating what is going on. This has been so much the case that one of the dissenting members of the previous CSB (1977-1980) listed as among his main complaints the fact that the superintendent's visits to schools were often made with considerable notice, and that there weren't enough formal evaluations of schools and principals. As the Superintendent explained: "I feel we should mainly be a service agency. But that is difficult when the central board sends down the garbage that it does. Look at this rating form for evaluating teachers and principals. That is a threatening procedure. All our evaluation is a supportive function. 'How can we help?' is the question we keep asking. I ask that of principals and teachers, and that is my service function. We do a lot of process evaluation. We are constantly assessing programs to make them better for next year. I refuse to use or take seriously these standard rating forms. They are ill-conceived and bad." One of his top district office staff confirmed this approach: "We don't have any formal checksheets," she explained, "but the superintendent, his deputies, and I sit down often and discuss which schools are effective and why. 9 out of 10 have to do with the principal." The implication of these remarks was that the informal evaluations are then acted on to help the principals run better schools, and all our evidence on the nature and frequency of principals' conferences with the superintendent and their many field visits tend to corroborate this view.

Nothing of significance goes on in this district and its schools that the superintendent isn't aware of, and very quickly. He visits schools frequently, his staff are in them all the time, he meets with groups of principals and teachers on a regular basis, and he has publicized his "open door" policy that provides still another vehicle for his keeping up-to-date on school developments. This takes place in an informal, non-bureaucratic way, a style, incidentally, that is very compatible with the outlook of the educators who regard themselves as "professionals" and thereby deserving of considerable autonomy from close bureaucratic styles of supervision.

There isn't much more that can be said about the nature of technical assistance from the district office to the schools. It is quite extensive, covering matters of curriculum, staff training, and assistance on community relations matters. The activities of the science coordinator that we described above are replicated by those of the other coordinators who work closely with principals, teachers, students, and parents in helping schools develop improved programs. Comments from principals confirm this pattern: "This is a close knit district," explained one principal. "There is much help on curriculum and staff training," Another reported: "The superintendent spends a tremendous amount of time in the field. He visits every school and sees the people in it. He gives much moral support and recognition to teachers. That is an important source of the high morale of staff in this district."

Moreover, these principals consistently saw the superintendent as treating them like professionals, respecting their need to have a free hand in running their schools. "We have almost complete autonomy in developing and implementing curriculum" explained one principal. "I am the captain of my ship in this district." "The superintendent gives complete autonomy to principals," reported another. "He stays in daily contact and provides tremendous support." Still another reported: "He allows his principals a lot of leeway and support." One of the principals with much seniority summarized the views of many: "Educators have high autonomy here. Of course, they all believe in the superintendent's philosophy of individualized teaching, and 99% of the principals are former APs in the district. We get a lot of help from the superintendent. He has discretionary funds. There is a lot of teacher training through the district office staff, and we have principals' meetings with the superintendent at various schools. The superintendent is open, accessible, listens, and acts on suggestions."

(3) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF - All that we have said thus far indicates the strong support the superintendent in this district gives to his professional staff. In addition to all the staff development programs, the superintendent has established a close personal relationship with his staff. Teachers and principals are encouraged to develop programs. They are singled out for special praise on numerous public occasions, and they are treated with considerable dignity. For example, when so many teachers were excessed out of the district with the fiscal cuts, the superintendent spoke with each individually, to try to cushion the blow and provide personal support. Moreover, the superintendent functions to protect district educators from being intimidated by any board members making unannounced visits or evaluations. He has come down very hard, in that regard, on dissident CSB members who might pay such visits to schools. And from the point of view of teachers and principals, as well as district office staff, this district is one of the most ideal places in the city in which to work.

This close relationship between the superintendent and his professional staff carries over to the UFT and CSA as well. We discussed before the strong coalition that includes both groups, in alliance with parents, the superintendent, and a majority of CSB members. Moreover, both district reps, from UFT and CSA, have served in that capacity in the district for many years; and their public statements on critical issues are invariably supportive of the superintendent's positions. As the UFT rep explained: "A good district is one where teachers can do the job properly, where they feel they have support, especially the support of the superintendent and CSB. The district office is very supportive of teachers. The superintendent goes out of his way to tell that to teachers. They help the schools all the time. There are in-service courses, and people like to teach here." One of the schools reps explained: "The superintendent has a good relationship with the UFT. He is an educator and you can really talk to him. He encourages teachers to talk to him. He has real respect for the professional. You feel that he is on your side. He visits schools regularly to keep up with what is going on." The principals' association rep expressed the same sentiments. "We are friends and colleagues," he reported about his relation with the superintendent. "He is open, accessible, listens, and acts on suggestions."

(4) THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE COMMUNITY - One of the hallmarks of this district has been its extensive district-wide network of parent and community organizations, many of which had worked in collaboration with the superintendent's office and in support of the school long before decentralization. The present superintendent and his staff have extended and developed much further this network. The two main parent organizations include a parent-educator group formed in 1950, and described earlier, that discusses broad policy questions, and the President's Council, composed of the PA presidents of the district's schools, that discusses specific issues those schools face.

It is clear that in this district, perhaps more than in almost any others we have studied, the superintendent has pursued a very active community relations strategy. That strategy reflects many aspects of his style -- his interest in mobilizing the strongest possible support for his educational philosophy and program; his desire to have parents be involved in district affairs, and his strong support for his professionals that he continually reinforces by publicizing their effective programs. There are several components of the strategy, including (a) the superintendent's practice of making monthly and year-end public reports on how the district is doing; (b) his establishment of parent curriculum committees in schools and district-wide; (c) his initiative in helping set up student organizations in every school; (d) his open door policy whereby representatives of students, parents, and community organizations are encouraged to come directly to him with complaints and grievances; and (e) his orchestration of all these (marketing, political mobilization) activities through his community relations, outreach office.

The monthly and year-end public reports by the superintendent of this district are an institution and they are true "events" in so many respects. They attest to his charismatic personality and his remarkable stage presence. They invariably involve extensive audio-visual presentations, with films and still slides of students involved in programs, and they are presented with much fanfare, humor, and expressions of caring about students and the educators involved. Often, students, staff, parents, and community leaders who have participated are part of his presentation, and the superintendent's staging of them indicates tremendous skills in showmanship. He rekindles through these performances the strong community support that he has, thus maintaining his leadership position in the district.

Parent curriculum committees are still another mechanism he has used effectively to maintain strong community support. They are often organized around the development of new programs and curriculum bulletins, and they function to get parents involved in such programs, even when the parents don't make that many substantive contributions. "Those parent curriculum committees are a vehicle for the principal to explain the programs of the school to parents," explained a district office staff person, "so that we have the parents with us in what we do. You will not find a district in the city with more parent involvement than this district." Sometimes, the parents make important contributions, however, as in the translation of one curriculum bulletin, Reading and Your Child, into 10 languages. Parents were responsible for many of those translations.

As for student organizations, they are active in schools throughout the district and with representation at lower grades as well as among junior high school students. Student suggestions on curriculum as well as on administrative matters are often taken into account. The input that this provides to the superintendent is often very important as an indicator of which schools have student unrest and why. The use of student comments, for example, in setting up the alternative, mini-school programs at conflict-ridden junijor highs illustrates how functional this strategy is both as a source of information that can be used in subsequent programs and as a means of "cooling out" potential dissidence and insurgence that might undercut the district's legitimacy in the community and seriously disrupt educational programs.

Both the parent and student involvements are then further reinforced by the superintendent's "open door" policy that has become widely known throughout the district. People who have grievances that they feel are important and have not been worked out at the school level are encouraged to come in to see him about them, and they are made to feel comfortable, given his informal style. A district staff person involved with students explained: "That open door policy is real. You can walk in any time.

And what happened with our kids from the student organizations is that they would walk right in, and they did, and they talked with the superintendent about such things as gym equipment, maintenance problems in the buildings, and so on. I ask you where else can kids just walk in to a superintendent's office like parents and get a reception. And you better believe that the word spread out through the district that this is happening."

One of the best indicators of the superintendent's style in relating to the community has been his community relations, outreach office. We have not found another district in the city that has committed itself to quite so developed an operation. The office has a white, one of the superintendent's long-term colleagues, a black male, and an Hispanic woman. The black had previously held a high staff position in public relations in the Lindsay administration and had also done much work as a teacher and program director in schools for troubled youth. He is able to relate well to students with similar emotional and academic problems. The Hispanic woman, in turn, worked closely with many parents and community organizations. One of the office's most important functions, in addition to the "cooling out" one, has been to maintain and expand the community network that the superintendent and his staff have put together. "We are active in building a lay leadership cadre," explained a staff person running the office. "We work to keep PA presidents and Forum people active as leadership people in the community, even after their kids graduate. Developing parent and lay leadership from among community-minded people is something we do here, so that the network will go on and expand over time. We have a network of roughly 300 people, many of them old-timers, in addition to people whose kids are still in the schools. A key person in this network, the head of the President's Council, is black. In fact, the PA presidents now are predominantly black and Hispanic."

The extent of community involvement of this district includes many program linkages as well with schools of education, with parks and cultural agencies where many science programs are conducted, with Lincoln Center of music programs, and with various artists' groups -- Young Audiences, Poets in Schools, Artists in Schools, etc. Many of the in-service teacher training programs are conducted in collaboration with colleges located in the district, as well as some outside. Training of open education teachers and the development of the district's many alternative approaches to education and its out-of-classroom learning sites are done with these various institutions. Since the superintendent's educational philosophy focuses so much on non-traditional learning modes and curricula, these program linkages with outside agencies are an important aspect of the district's activities.

Having thus indicated the wide range of productive community linkages that the district has established, one might seem hard pressed to find areas of stress or dysfunction, but they have existed. How significant they are and may become in the future is not clear, but their existence raises important questions about how the district is adapting to ethnic change.

No community tensions of any note existed before 1977. Since then, however, there has been a small dissenting group that has attempted to increase its power base and has been challenging the way the district has been run. That group has consisted of up to three CSB members, depending on the issue, and they have been joined by militant Hispanic educators, one now on the CSB and a former coordinator of the district's bilingual programs, and the others from outside. This very loosely coupled group, and they are mainly that at the present time, has raised a series of questions that have begun to constitute an agenda of issues that the group hopes may become the focus for an insurgent, protest politics in the near future, to change the district's mode of operations. The issues include, among others: (1) *the unrepresentative nature of the CSB*, particularly in relation to an emerging Hispanic student population (over 50%); (2) *the CSB's majority consensus around delegating much policy authority to the superintendent* and its seeming unwillingness to play a more active role; (3) *the perceived homogeneity of the district office and supervisory staff* (principals and PA), reflecting in large part the superintendent's power over staff selection and his policy of recruiting from within the district and only promoting minority staff to principal positions after a perid of grooming; (4) *the assumed closed decision making process in the district*, where dissenting CSB members and "outsider" groups feel they have little role; (5) *the extent of the district's commitment to bilingual programs* and the quality of those programs; and (6) *miscellaneous other aspects of the superintendent's style*.

While the list may imply that the superintendent and his CSB have pursued a strategy of ethnic exclusionism, whether intended or not, the issues are much more complicated than that. Most of the influential CSB members over the years have a long history of involvement in civil rights activity. They have worked actively to try to develop more minority parents and community leaders to gain election to the board and they have been active as well in facilitating the appointment of able minority educators to district office and principals positions. This has been more pronounced in the appointments of blacks to such positions than of Hispanics, but again, not out of any exclusionary motives. And the superintendent and his staff have worked with all the organized parent groups in the district, a majority of whom are now Hispanic and black.

The issue is more one of the "professionalism" ideology and traditions of key CSB members over the years and of the style of the superintendent. The CSB believes very in letting its superintendent make the key educational decisions for the district; and he has evolved a style that has made this an educationally effective district. In neither instance have exclusionary racial or ethnic attitudes played any role, though one result of these conditions has been a manner of running the district that has made it vulnerable to the criticism listed above.

Such criticisms must be interpreted, in turn, in the context of the vast and rapid ethnic changes this district has experienced since decentralization began. It now has an Hispanic student enrollment of close to 55%, and the fact that there are no Hispanic principals in any of its 28 schools and minimal Hispanic representation in the district office and on the CSB has been an important precipitating factor to the increasing protest. By contrast, there is no black protest in the district, indicating that there are no major problems related to the situation of that group. On the other hand, Hispanic educators and political leaders from all over the city, including some from within the district, have made the district's style a big focus of their protest activity in recent years. And in 1979 and 1980, for the first time since decentralization, several CSB meetings were marked by strong protest from this Hispanic leadership. Before discussing the particular issue that helped activate and coalesce the protests, a brief discussion is in order about how the superintendent's style may relate to this most recent development.

Before 1977, there was always a board member or two who disagreed with the majority on the board as to how the district should be run. They acknowledged that the superintendent had done an excellent job in running the district, and in almost every respect, but they did not like the way the CSB let him and his staff make educational policy. As one such board member noted: "He is an excellent superintendent, perhaps the best in the city. I only resent the closed decision making process." It is important to note that these dissenting CSB members tended to come from different backgrounds than the CSB majority. They were "outsiders" in background characteristics, in that they were not the upper middle class, professional, more highly educated and affluent people that most in the majority were, and they did not live in the immediate northern area. Most important, they felt closed out on the CSB, though they never reached a point where they could coalesce successfully around a high visibility issue.

In 1977, a third dissenting person joined them on the board, also an "outsider", and unlike the other two, he was a political activist with a lot of time for dissenting and organizing activity. What he did, in alliance with Puerto Rican educators, was to highlight some district decisions that reflected the superintendent's and the CSB's traditional style and try to build on them and use them as an organizing base for a political insurgency strategy.

One critical incident that became the focus of his organizing efforts was the replacement of a retiring principal in a predominantly Hispanic elementary school in the southern area of the district. He pushed for the appointment of an Hispanic principal, while the superintendent and CSB decided on appointing one of the APs in the school to the position, that person being white. He was joined in that effort by a militant Puerto Rican nationalist and activist educator whom the superintendent had transferred from her job as the district's bilingual coordinator, largely because of her political organizing activity while in that position. She had worked actively for this board member's election in 1977, and she was organizing parents to protest what she regarded as the district's limited commitment to bilingual education and to appointing Hispanics as principals and district office staff. The two of them, in turn, gained the support of leaders in the Puerto Rican Educators Association, a city-wide group formed to advance the interests of its constituency and of bilingual education. A small number of Hispanic parents, paraprofessionals, and teachers also supported the protests, but this was not in any sense a grass roots movement. Rather, it was an attempt by some activists to undertake such an organizing effort.

Many of the criticisms listed above were thus highlighted by this insurgent group who claimed that the appointment of the white principal in this Hispanic school with its many non-English-speaking students and parents, reflected in microcosm a style that had so excluded Hispanics from meaningful participation in district and school affairs and had neglected their needs. They staged many lively protests in the district office and at monthly CSB public meetings, and they tried to gain the support of the Chancellor and an Hispanic central board member, with the latter sending angry notes to the superintendent and CSB, indicating his extreme dissatisfaction with their failure to appoint an Hispanic. Most important of all, they kept highlighting the fact that this district has a non-representative board that handled the issue in a way insensitive to Hispanic interests, that the appointment reflected the superintendent's promotion from within policy that had so excluded Hispanics in the past, that it represented, along with other actions of the superintendent, a lack of commitment to a strong bilingual education program, and that it typified the closed decision process within the district.

Basically, most of the protest has focused on "affirmative action" issues, rather than on the quality of education and professional leadership in the district. There has been the inclusion as well of complaints about the nature and quality of the district's bilingual education programs, and they are an area of concern for Hispanic educators who have used the district as a vehicle for their city-wide efforts to enhance bilingual programs. And, of course, including such complaints might give greater legitimacy to the protest, indicating that it was not just an issue of jobs.

In actual fact, many of the predominantly Hispanic, southern area schools in the district contain alternative and enrichment programs of individualized approaches to learning that those in other parts of the district do; and even in this elementary school, where all the protest took place, there are many such programs.

It is unclear what may result from this recent protest. The most active CSB member who worked on mobilizing and promoting it did not run in 1980. On the other hand, the former bilingual coordinator did and got elected. The protest did not result in any change in the appointment, and that white principal remains in the elementary school. Moreover, CSB meetings are now peaceful once again, as the chancellor did not interfere with the board's decisions, claiming that it was a district matter. While the Hispanic central board member supported the protest, he was unable to alter the decision, either.

The response of both the CSB and superintendent has been to reassert their old policies that had been so effective in the past in developing good programs, while continuing to try to attract able minority educators, including more Hispanics, who share their educational philosophy. That philosophy does not include a commitment to maintenance programs in bilingual education (which they regard as separatist and parochial and as educationally unsound). And in that sense, the controversy might broaden in the future from one primarily focused on affirmative action to one over the nature of bilingual education programs as well. Since there is so much confusion and ambiguity as to the appropriate directions that bilingual education should take in the future, it seems unlikely that this issue alone would attract a large enough following to alter the leadership group or style that the district has generally followed.

Given the vast network of support that the superintendent has developed, both among parent and community groups and among educators, the district remains in a relatively stable political state. And given the commitment to orderly ethnic succession and the vast political skills of the superintendent, it also seems likely that he will successfully defuse this protest. The protest was functional in further sensitizing the superintendent and CSB to the importance of speeding up and placing a higher priority on the strategy of ethnic succession and it seems likely that they will do that in the future.

(5) DISTRICT OFFICE BUREAUCRACY - The district office staff function in District D in a very collegial, professional non-bureaucratic fashion. Having been recruited on the basis of their professional training and experience, their agreement with the superintendent's educational philosophy and style, and their collegial ties, they have come together as a most collaborative group. There seems to be little fragmentation, competition, and internal conflict among them, as collaborative relations across curriculum specialties and administrative functions are quite common. These are people who, by and large, have spent many years working with one another in this district. They constitute in that sense an occupational community, and the personal and professional relationships many have built up with one another over the years make them almost like a family.

This carries over into the way they function. It adds to the coherence and integration of the district's programs. And it contributes to the efficiency of program implementation, since little time need be spent in dysfunctional conflicts over who has what powers. Thus, the continuity, stability, and coordination of the district staff have led, in turn, to a continuity, stability, and coordination of programs. Moreover, the coordination does not just exist at the district office level. The same pattern of productive collaboration exists between its staff and principals and teachers in schools. Many share the same educational philosophy, and the district office staff provide much non-threatening and non-coerced technical assistance to the schools.

The other side of the coin is that this district office staff is perceived in some circles, for example, among Hispanic educators and other "outsiders", as a closed, inner circle, an ethnically homogeneous group who have been recruited largely from within and whose concern for furthering their educational philosophy and professionalism approaches has also become a concern for preserving their group as well. In actual fact, several have come from outside the district and among them are several blacks and a few Hispanics. While the staff is not nearly as integrated ethnically as those in District B and E, for example, neither is it as ethnically homogeneous as other districts.

The superintendent manages this group in the same informal yet organized way that he manages other parts of the district. He has people who endorse his educational philosophy and to whom he has delegated considerable authority, knowing beforehand their views as well as many of their strengths and weaknesses. Little time seems to be spent on staffing problems, since the superintendent had already screened these people. And some of them had been long-time colleagues dating back to before decentralization. He is the effective orchestrator of this group, and on any serious policy problems of program or administrative issues that must be tended to, he and his top staff function together in a way analogous to an informal task force to deal with the problem. Moreover, little of significance takes place in the district without his knowing about it quickly, so extensive is his network of professional and parent and community people.

Indeed, the superintendent and his staff are so much in control of district affairs that there is little left for the CSB to do. Many CSB members are conscientious, and several are professional educators in their own right, but they willingly delegate tremendous powers to the superintendent. The board as a body has much confidence and trust in him, and his performance has confirmed for them that trust. As for the recent protest over affirmative action, over bilingual programs, and over his style of recruiting from within and of running the district with a firm hand, again the majority on the CSB has given its strong support.

Conclusions

One may legitimately question, however, whether the professionalism ideology of a CSB that exists so much in this district and the strong leadership of a superintendent that also exist here, and that we generally support, is the most viable pattern of governance over the long run. It may be very functional as decentralization is getting underway, to keep some types of political pressure exerted by self-interested boards and community "power brokers" from disrupting effective education. Unless a superintendent is delegated considerable authority to find able staff, establish a coherent philosophy and direction to a district's programs, and effectively implement them, decentralization is not going to work. On the other hand, if too much power and control then become well established in the professional staff, there is bound to be a counterreaction in many districts, where some newly organizing citizen groups and others who regard themselves as "outsiders" begin to question the professionals' authority and power. That is particularly likely in a district like this, where ethnic change takes place rapidly. And in such situations, the superintendent and professional staff are going to have to accept the challenges to their authority, not necessarily defining them as unwarranted intrusions on professionalism and "good" educational practices, but as legitimate expressions of concern for gaining greater "representation" in district policies and program decisions.

Public service delivery agencies, including school systems are, after all, "representational" bureaucracies that must be accountable to the publics they serve. And while it is useful that the professionals lead and try to "educate" those publics in accordance with the professionals' expertise, they are ill-advised to assume that they can or should completely control the publics' views as to what kinds of education are appropriate for their schools. The District D case may illustrate some of these issues. We have, in this instance, an effective superintendent who is in a position of such control that he is not as responsive as he might be to protests over his style and over some of his decisions. Even if the protests are initiated and led by many from outside the district, as is in fact the case, it would serve better the many effective things the superintendent has already done to respond more than he has to such protests and increase his efforts to appoint more qualified minority professionals to supervisory and district office positions. That may well happen in this district in the immediate future. If it does not, the protests will begin once again and the superintendent and his board will be taken up more in political confrontations than in the effective educational problem solving that has been the hallmark of their leadership under decentralization.

Indicators of Student and District Performance

This is by far the most rapidly changing district in the city, as we indicated at the start of the chapter. It went from 27.2% poor Hispanic in 1970, to 50.8% in 1978, and the number is higher now. Considering the fact that this population has the lowest reading scores of any in the city, the best that the district might do under decentralization is to keep the anticipated declines in reading scores at a minimum. It seems to have done that, having shown almost no change during the period from 1971-79. In three grades (2,3, and 6) reading scores slipped slightly, and in three others (4.5. and 9) the gains were very small. On balance, then, reading scores in District D have not changed much since 1971, a pattern that one might deem an indicator of effectiveness, given the district's demographic changes. (See Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.7

DISTRICT D
Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change (-)
Two	2.7	2.6	(-0.1)
Three	3.5	3.4	(-0.1)
Four	4.4	4.5	0.1
Five	5.5	5.6	0.1
Six	6.6	6.4	(-0.2)
Seven	6.6	7.1	0.5
Eight	7.3	8.2	0.9
Nine	9.0	9.2	0.2

Compared to the city-wide trend during that time, District D did not keep up. The comparison between the district and city-wide trend is shown in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2

Changes in Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	District D	Citywide	Difference between District D & All Schools (-)
Two	(-0.1)	-0-	(-0.1)
Three	(-0.1)	0.1	(-0.2)
Four	0.1	0.6	(-0.5)
Five	0.1	0.7	(-0.6)
Six	(-0.2)	0.6	(-0.8)
Seven	0.5	1.0	(-0.5)
Eight	0.9	1.1	(-0.2)
Nine	0.2	1.1	(-0.9)

As the difference column shows, at each grade level there is a minus sign indicating that the schools did better city-wide than in District D during the period from 1971 to 1979.

The district did better, however, in its performance as measured by math scores than in reading. It was a little behind the city-wide average in 1971 (5.4 score for 5th graders in the district, compared with 5.7 city-wide) and narrowed the gap by 1978 to a point where they were almost the same (5.7 for district, 5.8 city-wide).

On average daily attendance, the district has declined slightly relative to the city. Thus, the district declined from 85.9 in 1970 to 84.6 in 1978; compared with a city-wide figure of 81.1 in 1970 and 82.8 in 1978.

Given the housing deterioration and the vast in-migration of poor Hispanics into the southern areas of the district, one might expect such changes to be relfected in patterns of vandalism. That has not been the case on two or our three indicators, though it has been on a third. Thus, unlawful entries have decreased from 109 in 1971 to 90 in 1978;

and fires have gone down from 6 to 2 during that period. Considering the fact that there were 19 in 1973, a year in which there was much in-migration, the drop since then has been marked. The number of broken glass panes, by contrast, has gone way up, from 7200 to almost 13,000. So there is no clear pattern.

The district's record on staff integration s generally similar to that of District G, with bigger changes at levels below those of principals and assistant principals, with the exception of blacks. The number of black principals increased from 1 to 4 (or from 4.2% to 12.5%) and of assistanct principals from 1.8% to 7.3%, during the period from 1971-1978. For Hispanics, there were no principalships and only 1 assistant principal in each year. On the other hand, there are increases in the proportions of black and Hispanic teachers. Blacks isncreased from 2.1% to to 7.7%, and Hispanicsa went up from 1% to 8.5%. And for the professional staff in its entirety, the increase in blacks has been from 2.5% to 13.2%, and that for Hispanics from 1.2% to 12.8%.

District D, then has generally held its own during a period of rapid transition. The many programs it has initiated seem to have helped stabilize student performance.

CHAPTER 6: District E

Poor, predominantly black district: Strong, Black superintendent from outside New York. Stabilized a turbulent, Ocean Hill-Brownsville type district, developed many effective programs, and significantly improved student performance. Combines (a) a production management style, emphasizing explicit goals in the form of learning objectives, a standardized curriculum, audits of schools, periodic testing to measure results, and heightened teacher expectations; (b) a traditional, structured approach to curriculum; (c) multiple strategies to upgrade junior highs, including two alternative, satellite schools and programs for gifted and talented students; (d) numerous other programs that enhanced school-based planning, teacher and parent participation, and linkages of schools with outside agencies; (e) extensive staff development efforts; and (f) significant increases in the proportions of minority staff. A strong superintendent-weak CSB district.

Our next district is one that has also developed many promising approaches to curriculum and instruction, though markedly different from either the alternative, non-traditional and bilingual programs of District B or the humanistic, open education approach of District D. The district is located in the civic, cultural, commercial, and intellectual center of one of New York's outer boroughs and contains within it several colleges and universities, many cultural institutions, and some large community development agencies. Indeed, this is one of the richest areas of the city in cultural and business institutions, and certainly of that borough. The district's residential areas are ethnically diverse, ranging from upper middle class white enclaves to a large black poverty area, the latter covering much of the district. There are, in addition, however, neighborhoods containing middle and lower middle income blacks as well as those in dire poverty.

The district's housing stock, along with these institutions, bodes promise for its eventual upgrading. There are many once-elegant brownstones and town and carriage houses in black as well as white residential areas, along with deteriorated tenements in the former. Significant numbers of such elegant homes have been renovated in different parts of the district, including its impacted poverty areas. As a result, a substantial black middle class group has moved into some poorer areas as have many whites into renovated brownstone neighborhoods as well. Moreover, many parts of the district had been slated for urban renewal and rehabilitation, prior to the city's fiscal crisis, including the possible relocation of a branch of the City University from downtown Manhattan. Even though most of those changes did not take place, the area has continued to attract and retain many middle class residents.

The district contains a population of roughly 200,000, with whites accounting for roughly 35%, blacks another 60%, and Hispanics the rest. The middle class and particularly the whites, however, have all but abandoned the public schools. Close to 80% of the public school students are black, another 18% are Hispanic, and no more than 2% are white. Many white residents send their children to private or parochial schools that are located near their homes. And middle class blacks as well have clamored to get into these schools, wanting "better" education than they feel is available in the public schools. The middle class and white withdrawal are most pronounced at the junior high level, as in other districts, with many local residents even sending their children to schools in a different borough.

A big controversy raged over this issue of junior high school transfers in the mid 1970s, and for a couple of years, the CSB had a district waiver policy that permitted the transfers, despite the superintendent's strong objections. There were even black CSB members who voted for the waiver, and it wasn't particularly a racial issue. A few years ago, the superintendent prevailed in having that policy eliminated, and he has embarked on a major program since then to make the junior high schools much better academically and therefore much more attractive to the middle class.

Major zoning controversies have also existed around an elementary school in a white middle class area, and they have consumed an inordinate amount of the CSB's and superintendent's time since decentralization began. Though this is one of 22 schools in the district, it has taken on tremendous importance as one of the last remaining white middle class schools. There have been times when two or even three CSB members served on the board largely to represent this school's white parent interests, and several CSB elections were bitterly contested over the issue of its zoning and grade organization. The school was involved in 1964 in a famous Princeton-Plan pairing for desegregation with another elementary school in a neighboring black area, the plan having been initiated by parents from the white community. Students from both schools were to attend the one in the white area for the first three grades and that in the black one for the next three. Over the years, however, white parents expressed much concern about their children traveling out, and in 1975, a fire in the second school led to the discontinuation of the pairing. Parents had lobbied for several years, even from before the fire, for a K-8 program so that their children would not have to travel outside. Since 50% of the students in their school are black, having been bused in from outside, so argue the plan's proponents, this would not serve to maintain a segregated neighborhood school, but rather to stabilize a desegregated one. Some CSB members representing this school have tried to get support from their black colleagues by proposing a similar K-8 school in a poor black area. Many blacks in the district nevertheless defined this K-8 proposal as a last ditch attempt by whites to retain control of "their" school, and they strongly opposed it. The proposal annally passed in 1980, however, and it has reflected and, in turn, contributed to some racial animosities within the district.

The enrollment of the district has declined a lot since decentralization, much like that in most other districts, from 25,633 in 1980 to 17,754 in 1979. This has, in turn, contributed to a decline in school building utilization from 98% in 1980 to 70% in 1979. In order to forestall school closings and the community hardship that often results (e.g., vandalism), the district has resorted to several strategies to make more efficient use of extra building space. It has developed two alternative junior high schools, each of which is housed in an underutilized elementary school. It has added a grade to some elementary schools. And it has filled other seats with handicapped students. Thus far, the number of closings has been limited.

An important characteristic of this district affecting its politics is the nature of it boundaries. The district includes only segments of several distinct subcommunities, including roughly 1/3 of a predominantly white middle class "brownstone" neighborhood, almost all of another one, and 1/2 and perhaps even less of a large, black poverty area. District lines are obviously important in determining who will control the CSB, and in this case, the inclusion of white middle class areas with poor black and Hispanic ones meant that blacks would not have the control that their numbers in the public schools might have indicated. They constituted only 2 of the 9 CSB members in 1970, and though the number went up to a majority of 5 in 1973, it remained at that level in 1977. This was, then, a relatively unrepresentative CSB throughout most of decentralization. While many of its white members were committed to improving schools in black as well as white areas, we have already indicated how 2 or 3 members from one such area consistently voted as a bloc, representing the unique zoning concerns of one school only.*

Political Contest of Decentralization - When decentralization became a contested issue in the late 1960s and early 70s, the political situation in this district was very much like it was in Ocean Hill-Brownsville.** There was much black/white confrontation in the schools and district office and there were physical attacks on white teachers and principals, reflecting a very turbulent politics. CSB meetings were characterized by many such confrontations, and for the first couple of years of decentralization, they were interrupted constantly by angry residents and community activists who questioned the legitimacy of the CSB to set policy for the district. Brooklyn CORE and the Afro-American Teachers Association were two of the militantly active groups, but the negative feeling about the CSB and about decentralization was reportedly wide-spread.

Racial tensions were so marked that even those white educators who had publicly supported decentralization reported their fear while attending these meetings. As one recounted: "I believe in decentralization, I felt the demands the community people were making on the schools were generally justified. And I attended CSB meetings regularly and wanted decentralization to work. It was even known publicly how much I favored community control. But I was white and Jewish and these were very rough times. I would leave these meetings constantly asking myself: 'Did you say anything wrong, that might possibly be construed as racist, that might lead to harassing visits to your school?' I never knew whether my tires might be slashed, and I even feared for my physical safety as I left the building."

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* Several of these white area CSB members over the years seemed only on the board to represent the interests of that one school. Their involvement in other district issues, as well as their attendance at CSB meetings were otherwise minimal.

** See Maurcie R. Berube and Marilyn Gittell, Confrontation at Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Prager, New York, 1969.

Confrontations between white educators and community activists often took place in schools as well. Small groups of militant black activists visited schools on a regular basis, questioning and sometimes harassing principals and teachers. The white principal of one junior high had his jaw broken in a scuffle with one such group, and the principal quoted above, widely known in the district as a dedicated educator who was also strongly committed to community control, recounted his experience: "Sonny Carson, one of the most outspoken militants, and his group used to come to my school regularly, telling me that this was their school. I told them they had the wrong guy, that I was their friend, and that they should move on to other schools where there might be a real problem of the staff not being sensitive enough to the concerns of the community. They kept coming back, though, for quite a while."

In brief, this was a black poverty area district where the legitimacy of the public schools was in serious question. The staff and CSB were overwhelmingly white, and the goal of many community activists, reflecting the politics of the area and the times, was to have many more black teachers and administrators running the schools. They had more than ample evidence that these schools were not educating the poor black youngsters of that district. In 1971, for example, only 18% of the students in the district were reading at or above grade level, and many teachers and principals had low expectations of how much their students could learn and had all but given up, often running their schools as little more than custodial operations. In one junior high school that was typical of many, students roamed the halls, false fire alarms were chronic, teacher absenteeism was very high, and little education went on. In fact, junior high schools throughout the district were such a battleground that full-time police served in them until 1975. Conditions of poverty and poor student preparedness were obvious factors in the situation, but the educators' limited capacity to cope, notwithstanding the difficult task that they faced, and the fact that a vast majority of them were white (over 76% in 1971), only exacerbated the situation.

The hostility between this district's schools and the community thus ran very high. The schools were generally seen as alien, outpost institutions, run by and for outsiders, rather than as community ones. Communication, trust, and working relationships between teachers and students and between schools and the wider community had too often completely broken down, and in the early 1970s decentralization wasn't seen as much of a solution, either.

The early disappointment and disillusionment with decentralization were a product, in addition, of the unrepresentative nature of the first CSB (1970-1973), as discussed above. The fact that one upper middle class enclave, accounting for no more than 5% of the district's enrollment had nevertheless elected 5 CSB members, all of them white, did not contribute to a lot of community acceptance of decentralization. This came about because the white middle class voted, as in other districts. Also, some black leaders encouraged their constituency to boycott the first election as a protest against what they regarded as a poor decentralization law that had granted powers to CSBs.

A critical development in this district since the early 1970s has been its increasing political stability which began just before the appointment in 1973 of its present superintendent and has increased markedly since then. Several factors led to this: (1) Increasing numbers of blacks on the CSB and as teachers, principals, and district office staff; (2) the absorption of community protest and militancy over the schools into an institutionalized parent participation process whereby key staff appointments (the superintendent, principals) were made with community involvement; (3) the selection under decentralization of two black males as superintendents, the latter of whom has been serving in that capacity since 1973; (4) the election to the CSB in 1973 of one of the most influential of the black activist leaders in the district who was instrumental in getting the present superintendent appointed and gave him strong support as the superintendent was getting established; and (5) that superintendent's own strong leadership skills that have resulted over the past 7 years in his initiating important educational programs and administrative improvements. Much of the district's success is a direct result of his leadership, and he has also emerged as an active spokesman for the interests of black districts city-wide, as they have tried to secure what they regard as their "fair share" of Board of Education funds and staff.

A turning point for the district was the election in 1973 of 5 blacks to the CSB, at least two of whom became very active in the selection of a superintendent. One was instrumental in encouraging the existing superintendent to resign. That superintendent, a black male and former principal in the district, had not provided the kind of leadership that this new board member and some of the colleagues wanted, and they then engaged in what turned out to be a prolonged search for a successor that went on for many months before they finally agreed on a candidate. He was initially the second choice of two factions on the CSB, but after a prime candidate suddenly withdrew from consideration -- after Marcus Foster, the Oakland superintendent had been shot dead, with this candidate expressing concerns about the volatile situation still in New York and this district -- the present superintendent was selected. A former teacher and educational consultant in California, he was all but unknown to the board members. One of the new black members, however, former head of the Afro-American Teachers Association and a militant community activist, supported this superintendent's candidacy, working hard to secure the necessary votes for his selection. And over the next couple of years, that board member played an important mediating role between the new superintendent and the board. He thus gave the superintendent much legitimacy in a disbelieving and politically unstable community, and this provided a critical beginning to what was to become a highly successful period of service that is still ongoing.

The procedures the CSB followed in selecting the new superintendent also helped estalblish his credibility in the early years, as well as calm down the district and decrease the incidence of random outbursts against the schools. "We really did a thorough job in bringing in parents and community groups," reported a CSB member active in this period. "Nobody could easily say they weren't consulted, and though we undoubtedly made some mistakes in our term, I don't believe that was one of them. It may have been one of the best things we did." Participative management is often a slow tedious process, particularly when the groups having an input represent as diverse a set of interests as was so in this case. It also, however, increases the commitments of the participants to the decision finally arrived at, as they develop a pride of ownership in it as something to which they had an important input.

One may not conclude, however, that the political settling down was that far along when the new superintendent took over in January, 1974. The election of a new CSB and this participative process did help, but for all intents and purposes, one can take the time of the superintendent's arrival as a base period against which to assess how decentralization affected education in this district.

When the superintendent arrived, while there had been some quieting down of community militance, most of the conditions that had existed at the start of decentralization still did. Reading and math scores had not improved that much, attendance was still low, there was still much tumult in the junior high schools, the CSB was quite factionalized and along many different lines (e.g., parent vs. UFT, white vs. black areas, those who wanted the superintendent to run the district vs. those who wanted the board to play a more active role), and no board-based leadership group had emerged to deal with these many problems. "This was still an angry community when I arrived," reports the superintendent in retrospect, "and I had some people come into my office, pushing their way past my secretary, saying who is this guy from California who was going to try to exploit these kids for his own interests. They even threatened me physically."

A particularly troublesome problem for the superintendent and the CSB was the fact that the teachers' union had been very active in the district in an attempt to protect teacher interests in such a hostile environment. It had elected several people to the board in 1973, and they voted consistently as a bloc. They were opposed to the candidate for superintendent the CSB finally selected. "They wanted to dominate the board and could always count on four votes," explained one CSB member elected in 1973, with the support of parents and a Reform Democrat club. "They weren't in favor of our candidate. He was from California. They always had problems with outsiders they weren't sure they could control, and they held up the appointment for several months. They came so close to winning, but we finally rallied the independents on the board. Some of our group were not that impressed with our candidate initially, but they grew to respect him and realize his capabilities later on. And the UFT so alienated several board members that some supported him, to fight the UFT."

This new superintendent had thus arrived as an outsider in a district beset with many educational and political problems, and with a highly organized teachers' union that was wary of such outsiders and opposed to many of the people responsible for bringing him in. The constitutencies his supporters represented included blacks, parent groups, liberal whites, minority educators, and Reform Democratic clubs, in contrast to white educators, old-line unionists, and Regular Democrats on the other side.

The substantial factionalism on his CSB and the existence of a strong group who had initally opposed him did not make the early years of this superintendent's service easy ones. But being astute politically and analyzing the situation very well, he was able to establish himself and his authority over time. "He was really smart," reported one CSB member. "He read his board members very well. He knew just who we were and where we came from. He learned to play the political game that he had to and to play it well." In addition, the fact that a strong, black activist board member kept supporting the superintendent and mediating between him and the board also helped a lot.

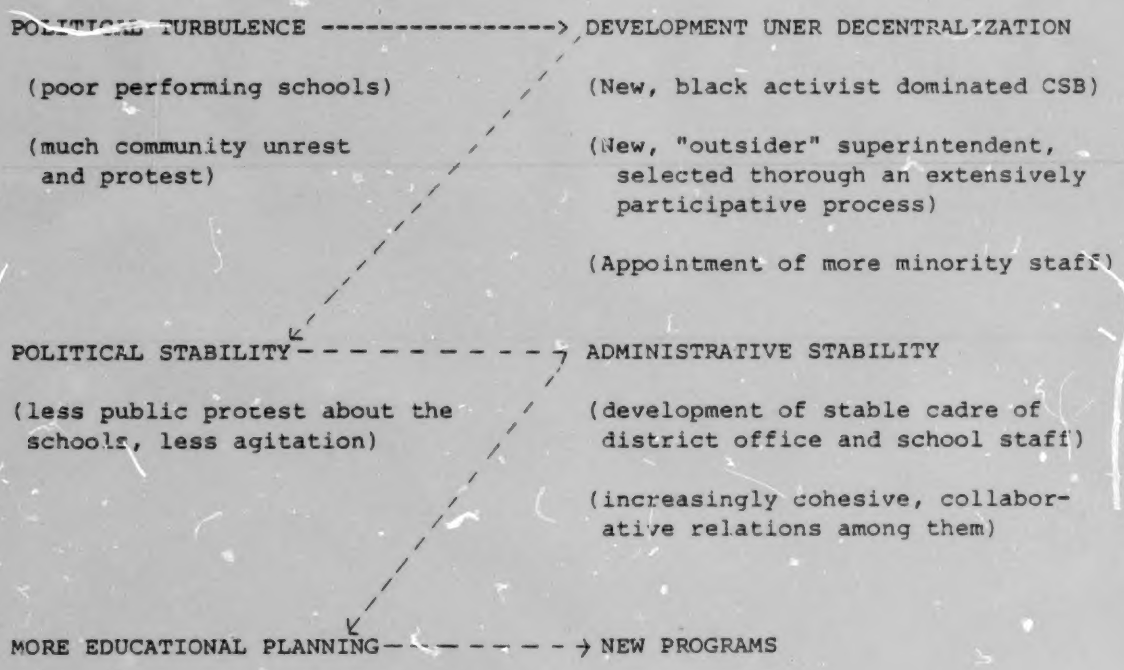
Over time, somewhat slowly at first because of the factionalism on the CSB and in the community and because of the many educational problems in the district, this superintendent built his strength as the leading figure in the district. He established a competent and stable district office staff; and while board members did not agree on the competence of all of his staff, or on his tendency to take on more and more authority as in staffing, program, and policy decisions, he not only moved into a position of stronger leadership, but he began to produce increasingly positive results that by 1980 showed this to be one of the most effective districts in the city under decentralization.

Before exploring the nature of this superintendent's relations with his CSBs and of his management style, it is important to encapsulate the positive developments that resulted from his leadership. A political stability that had just begun to appear when he arrived was considerably deepened as he established himself and undertook several initiatives to improve education and administration within the district. One of many early things he did was to inform principals that they had to work out any serious school problems in private meetings with him and his staff, rather than just to protest about them in public. "Principals used to come in with parents at public CSB meetings," a top district official explained, "and complained about not having enough staff in their schools. He told them he didn't want that any more, and he put an end to it." What this did was to help create a more stable administrative as well as political climate that then made it possible to engage in the educational planning necessary to get needed programs underway.

In addition, several new principals and district office staff were appointed. Many were black, had served in the district for a long time, and/or had been raised there. There remain many white staff as well, however and no attempt was made to establish a predominantly black staff or recruit just on the basis of race. But there was clearly an increase in black appointments, in the schools and district office, and of people with both educational credentials and a sensitivity to community needs, and that helped stablize the district. It has, in addition, helped establish expectations among teachers that students there are capable of learning. As one CSB member recalled from these early developments: "I think one of the plusses of decentralization here is that we had many more minority staff -- teachers and principals -- who could relate to the kids and who did not have the view that they couldn't learn. One of our big problems in this district was the low expectations staff had of kids being able to learn. You got much less of that with minority educators." In brief, a new, black, middle class professional educator group emerged in this district, helped legitimatize the schools, and contributed as well to improved education.

The stability that resulted from these developments helped, in turn, to create a climate for educational improvement efforts. In the present superintendent's early years, sheer survival was a reasonable goal, as he had to steer his way between and among various factions -- in particular, between UFT and parent oriented CSB members. He was able to develop enough support over time, however, to embark on many improvement efforts, with the district having emerged as one of the most positive examples of what has happened under decentralization, though with some internal stains and conflicts.

These developments may be summarized in a way that indicates their mutually reinforcing nature. They constitute a series of positive feedback loops, to use the language of organizational analysis, with developments under decentralization leading to political and administrative stability, allowing for more long-range planning and sustained educational improvements efforts then before, further enforcing the stability and allowing for still more planning and program development. The following chart provides a summary of the developments:



POLITICAL TURBULENCE ----------------> DEVELOPMENT UNER DECENTRALIZATION

(poor performing schools)

(much community unrest and protest)

(New, black activist dominated CSB)

(New, "outsider" superintendent, selected thorough an extensively participative process)

(Appointment of more minority staff)

POLITICAL STABILITY - - - - - - - - - - -> ADMINISTRATIVE STABILITY

(less public protest about the schools, less agitation)

(development of stable cadre of district office and school staff)

(increasingly cohesive, collaborative relations among them)

MORE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING - - - - - - - - -> NEW PROGRAMS

Superintendent/CSB Relations -- Despite the superintendent having remained in office since early 1974 and having initiated many new programs that have improved the schools and the performance of students markedly over what they were when he arrived, his relationships with his CBSs have been uneven. Virtually all his boards have indicated a high regard for him as an educator and administrator and acknowledged the many improvements that have taken place under his leadership.* At the same time, he has been in continued conflict with them over the issue of who should run the district, and it is similar to the conflict that we have found in districts throughout the city, particularly those in which superintendents have exerted strong leadership.

The most active and perhaps most effective CSB in this district under decentralilzation was the one elected in 1973. It encouraged the resignation of a superintendent it felt was not providing strong leadership. It found a new one from outside who later turned out to be very effective. And it included among its members several highly competent and dedicated people who spent a lot of time on school board activities. One, a black, female attorney, later to become a city commissioner, was an effective CSB president for two years. Another, a mechanical engineer who headed his own company, was active on almost a daily basis. And a third, a black teacher, and former head of the Afro American Teachers Association, was the pivotal figure in the selection and later support of the superintendent.

This board did what decentralization advocates city-wide had orginally hoped CSBs would do. It changed many key people running the schools and created a political framework within which strong professional leadership might emerge. It had, in brief, done its main job, and though the superintendent was to later emerge as the key figure in the district, it was the board that put him there and some of its active members that enabled the "will of the community" for better schools to gain expression through such an elected body.

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* See the discussion below on the superintendent's management style and on student performance.

At the same time, however, because of the tremendous diversity of constituencies and interests within this community - ethnic, class, political, geographic, professionals vs. parents - a function largely of the way in which the district lines were drawn, this board and its successors were highly factionalized. And its successors became less and less active or effective, as many able, dedicated members dropped out. By 1977, the board became a very weak, divided body, with few of its members putting in much time on board activities.

These CSBs did, however, remain active in one sense, and that was to continue to be concerned about the superintendent's strong leadership. Because of their extreme factionalism and the increasing numbers of their membership who were quite inactive or only involved in very limited ways - for example, to protect a particular school or constituency - they usually failed to reach consensus about district policies. Then, when the superintendent moved into the vacuum and took over more of a policy as well as administrative role, both as a function of his own personality and of the demands of the situation, the board complained that he was taking on too much power and not allowing it to play its legitimate role. In brief, they did little of what they should have done, and then complained when he filled the gap. It was this relationship, then, that constituted one of the main internal strains in the district - reflecting conflicts that are common to many districts, that seem endemic to the way decentralization has been established in New York, and that probably require legislative and procedural reforms if it is to work better in the future. Fortunately for this district, the conflicts did not seem to spill over that much to the schools, at least as judged by the evidence of effective new programs and improved student performance by the end of the 1970s. There have been other districts, however where that has not been the case.

From the superintendent's point of view, there was a need for strong leadership in this district that he felt he had to provide, lest there be a continuation of the poor quality education and parent and community frustration that had existed when he arrived. He thus took on both administrative and, to some extent, policy powers much to the CSB's chagrin. In that sense, there had been a limited role consensus between them. Thus, at a January 20, 1981 public meeting, where the CSB was caught by surprise by a large turnout of angry parents charging it was delinquent in moving ahead on the superintendent's contract renewal, an eight-year member of the board and its current president "admits that some board members have a problem with the superintendent's style, feeling that he acts too independently and, at times, fails to keep them informed of what's going on."

What exists in this district is simply a reflection of superintendent/ CSB conflicts that we found in many district, though with the usual embellishments that reflect the particular personalities involved. The superintendent saw his CBS as periodically encroaching on his educational and administrative authority. They saw him, in turn, as moving unilaterally on matters on which they felt they should have been consulted. For example, he made many decisions on programs, on staffing (appointments, tenure), and on budget that they regarded as policy matters and within their jurisdiction. They complained that he often informed them too late for them to have any input, and some felt that this reflected his style of treating them as his subordinates who should take direction from him instead of the other way around. In 1979 and 1980, the CSB finally did a detailed evaluation of him in preparation for his next contract renewal, essentially confirming the points we have just discussed. It gave him very high ratings as an educator and administratior and lower ones on his relationship with the board.

The basis for his survival was at least two-fold. First, he had developed many new programs that had begun to show results. And second, parents, community leaders, and other local constituencies, including educators within the district were increasingly aware of this, as evidenced by the public CSB meeting referred to above at which a large group of parents made angry complaints about what they regarded as the CSB's "stalling" on his contract renewal. His increasing attention in recent years to publicizing the effective programs he had initiated and to conducting forums with parents and eliciting their views on education matters only further reinforced that support. In addition, the fact that his board seemed in a perennial state of disarray, like so many other boards around the city, gave it little legitimacy and power, either to change superintendent persistently worked to develop his programs and staff, improve administrative procedures, and cultivate closer relation with parents, teachers, and other district constituencies. He was in the district office and schools every day, tending to these matters with his staff, while board members only dropped in occasionally, with several of them functioning largely as an "absentee group". Moreover, the private executive sessions of the board were held in "secret", and thereby in violation of state law requiring that they be open to the public; and that didn't give them much credibility with district constituencies.

Indeed, many of the pathologies of CSBs that we observed in other districts existed in this one. Board members often failed to spend much time on district matters; committees met rarely and were generally ineffective; the diversity of constituencies and agendas of CSB members continued to divide them; and they never got around to developing any coherent sense of mission as a functioning group. Often, only 1 or 2 CSB members would be currently active in district affairs, and several of the others were absent for many meetings. Sometimes, a CSB committee would not meet for months at a time. Periodically, one or another CSB member would acknowledge these weaknesses at a CSB meeting and urge that they all convene for several days, either in the district or preferably at some retreat, to get themselves together, "get to know one another," and develop some coherent sense of purpose. Those suggestions were not acted on. Various CSB members either couldn't find the time or didn't have any interest, with the result being that they continued to function in a factionalized and unproductive manner, having no clear sense of direction as a board.*

Viewing the conflict from the perspective of the superintendent's behavior, it might have been minimized had he communicated more with his board prior to making key decisions, and had he responded more flexibly to board criticisms and inquiries in relation to particular issues. Instead, the board members saw him as having an exaggerated concern for maintaining his own professional autonomy and as interpreting CSB inquiries and criticisms as threats to that. Moreover, they regarded him as hyper-sensitive to criticism, when the job required that he be more accomodating to it. Some of his reactions to board criticism, in this regard, that seemed to further antagonize them included flooding them with paper (often unsummarized documents) when they said he didn't keep them informed, sending them angry letters about their meddling in administration, casting aspersions on their effectiveness and making periodic threats to quit.

In brief, this is an example of a strong superintendent and weak CSB district in which the superintendent was effective despite continued conflicts with his CSB over his and their role. The board keeps renewing his contract, however, and the schools keep getting better. Moreover, the conflict has not spilled over to other relationships. By and large, the superintendent has been able to shield the professional staff from any repercussions the conflict might have. The CSB clearly wants less administrative decentralization where much of the power is in the hands of the superintendent and more political decentralization where it makes policy. The superintendent has not found that acceptable.

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* This is based much more on an analysis of past boards than of the one elected in 1980. But there is little evidence that it has moved in any significantly new directions from its predecessors.

MANAGEMENT STYLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

The story of this district, then, is one of how an active, aggressive superintendent took advantage of his authority under decentralization in ways that were not possible under the old system. He has strong leadership abilities and has been able to do many things under decentralization that would not have taken place otherwise. Indeed, it is very likely that he would not have been chosen under the old centralized system where only "insiders" who had moved up the ranks within the bureaucracy were appointed to such superintendent positions. Or if he were chosen, as a freak case where they let an outsider in, he might well have decided not come, had he known anything in advance about the system, since it would not have permitted him to take the initiatives that he did.

The management style that he pursued was one where he was in command and exerted strong leadership and control, rather than rely that much, at least in the initial stages, on managing by consensus or on participative management. He was in that sense more of what has come to be called a

Theory X rather than Theory Y manager, though, as we will indicate below, his style is much more complex and subtle than what is usually implied by the use of those terms.*

The implications of much of the early management literature on these styles are that authoritarian management is at least in the long run inferior to a more participative style, since it antagonizes and alienates people being managed who are then less likely to endorse and follow through on the programs and policies unilaterally imposed on them. By contrast, participative management is seen as more effective because it generates more of a consensus and pride of ownership within an organization on the part of key participants (subordinates, technical staff, fellow managers, boards) who feel they have a stake in carrying out programs they helped shape.**

There is an increasing awareness among recent management writers, however, that this is a somewhat simplistic notion. They indicate that what management style is most appropriate depends on the situation and that there is no "one best way." Further more, they suggest that these are not either-or styles and that some combination or phased use of them may be most appropriate. Both points are relevant in understanding this superintendent's approach.

The situation confronting him when he arrived was one of extreme crisis, requiring strong central leadership, somewhat along the lines of a Theory X style.***

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* See Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise, McGraw-Hill, 1960, for the original development of these concepts. They refer, respectively, to more authoritarian vs. democratic styles of management.

** Rensis Likert's New Patterns of Management, McGraw-Hill, 1961 presents this point of view.

*** See Paul R. Lawrence and Jay Lorsch, Organiztion and Environment, Harvard University Press, 1966 for an early presentation of this contingency theory approach.

We have already described the nature of that crisis, with the central point being that not only were the schools not functioning and many parents, activists, and community groups very agitated about this, but a power vacuum existed. Community groups and the board were extremely factionalized, and no individual or coalition had moved to step into the breach. Moreover, some of the key constituencies that a Theory Y or participative management style would have indicated should be consulted were too much a part of the problem to provide a constructive early input - for example, the teachers' union and principals' association, and in fact, they were not generally consulted in the superintendent's development of many programs as will be discussed below.

(1) CURRICULUM STYLE - Decentralization must ultimately be assessed in terms of its impact on the classroom and on student performance, and it has had important effects in this district, mainly through the leadership of the superintendent. Reflecting his own educational philosophy and responding to what he saw as the needs of the poor, black and Hispanic areas, whose schools constituted the core of the district (90% or over), the superintendent played an active role in restructuring education there. It would be more accurate to say that he moved, not so much toward a restructuring, as toward imposing a structure where very little, if any, had existed before.

This was, as noted above, a predominantly poverty area, black district with large numbers of low achieving students. It was also a district in considerable turmoil politically; and the combination of ill-prepared students from poverty backgrounds, with a climate of unrest, in which many schools were regarded almost as alien outposts, manned by and for "outsiders", made it very difficult to carry on an effective educational program there. The junior high schools were the worst in this regard, but elementary schools, with the exception of those very few in the remaining white middle class enclaves did not have a lot of learning going on either.

Many principals and their teachers were unable to cope with the classroom situations they faced. While the principals set the tone of the schools and had to be held accountable for what went on there, it was the teachers who were closest to the action, and who had to somehow deal directly with the students. A common tactic of many was to lower their aspirations as to what might be taught, rationalize it by pointing to the impoverished backgrounds and limited preparation of the students, and end up running all but custodial classrooms. Outstanding and high aspiring teachers always existed, but the more typical approach was to have low expections as to what the students might learn. Moreover, given the political turmoil and social pathologies of some of the poverty area communities, there wasn't a lot of educational planning going on either. This combination of limited expectations and a catch-as-catch-can curriculum undoubtedly had a devastatingly negative impact on student learning, reinforcing the negative conditions that produced it in the first place.*

Building on preliminary efforts by his predecessor, this superintendent embarked on an ambitious strategy for improving education in the district. The strategy had several components that the superintendent began to put in place in the fall of 1977, and the effort has been developed much more broadly since then. In contrast to the open education approach in District D and the many alternative schools and programs in District B, the emphasis in this district, reflecting the superintendent's philosophy and sense of the "needs" of students, was a more traditional and managerial one. It combined (a) *a behaviorist, goal conscious, production management approach to curriculum*, standardizing it and making it much more uniform throughout the district; (b) *an emphasis on skills training*, "back to basics", and having much more structure in the curriculum; reinforced through (d) *an increasingly elaborated set of management controls and supports*, including an extensive system of *tests* in every major subject (measuring student *and* teacher performance), unannounced *audits* of every school in the district, and a fairly extensive program of *technical assistance and in-service training* for "marginal" teachers to help improve their performace.

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* Numerous accounts of classrooms in poverty area schools of New York City document this common orientation among teachers, including Mirian Wasserman The School Fix, NYC, USA, Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, New York, 1970.

These approaches were all part of single strategy that had particular relevance for the needs of this poverty area, black district. It reflected a traditional structured approach and provided in the sense for a good fit between the curriculum and its management on the one side and the community on the other. It probably would not have been that well received or effective in liberal, middle class areas of the city as, indeed, it wasn't in such areas of this district where at least some parents expressed more of a preference for open education programs. But it worked well for schools in poor black areas and probably matched parent preferences there, even as those parents may not necessarily have articulated their values nearly as explicitly as their white middle class counterparts.

The superintendent had thus formulated a structured strategy to replace the chaos, the low standards and expectations of teachers, and the lack of uniformity in curriculum that had prevailed for so long. These were conditions common to many poverty area districts, but rarely, if ever, approached in such a systematic, district-wide fashion.

The entire strategy hinged on the development of *curriculum learning objectives* (CLOs), under the leadership of the district office. In the language of behavioral psychology which the superintendent often used in describing this approach, the CLOs were a series of explicit statements about terminal behaviors required of all students. The terminal behaviors, in turn, referred to the substance (concepts, facts) of various subjects - e.g., math, science, history, etc. The strategy was formulated in the context of the superintendent and his staff's observations that there was virtually no uniformity in the curriculum of the district. As in all poverty area districts, the amount of pupil mobility between and among schools was very high; and for a student to move from one elementary or junior high school to another was almost like moving to another country, so poorly articulated was the curriculum. The resulting discontinuity in learning experiences, let alone the difficulty of developing minimal standards under such conditions, was quite devastating. Each principal and teacher seemed to be pursuing a posture of what might be called "reactive individualism" that in some cases came close to anarchy, as they attempted to cope with their constantly changing pupil registers and with the motivational and learning difficulties of so many of their students.

Teachers working under such conditions of high pupil mobility and of having many students with learning problems tended to cope either by lowering their expectations and running custodial schools, as we already described, or "doing their own thing." There was nothing wrong with the latter, except that it left the student with a disparate array of learning experiences, but with no common core of knowledge. As the superintendent recalled: "I noticed, for example, that a subject like social studies was not taught in any uniform way. One teacher might have just returned from a summer in Israel, and she taught a great section on that. But some other teacher had just returned from Africa, and she taught that. They were teaching good material, but they were doing their own thing. And we had to make certain that our kids were exposed to a whole scope and sequence of materials."

The particular precipitating experiences that were immediately responsible for the superintendent's moving ahead on this learning objectives strategy are important to note. "I found in our new satellite junior high schools that I had high achieving, fast readers who were still way behind in math," he reported, "and it had nothing to do with their intelligence, but rather in the fact that some things were not being taught to them. I had a rectangle problem that all those students had to work on as part of the over-all testing procedure to place them in classes. It turned out that many of the bright and fast readers were ignorant so such basic concepts as what is a ruler and what is length and width, so they got that problem all wrong."

The way to reverse the non-functional coping strategies of teachers that led to such uneven learning experiences, suggested the superintendent after observing them over a period of several years, was to institute some form of *educational planning* that would involve instituting *uniform standards*. He and his staff did this through extensive use of the Board of Education's curriculum guides. They took these materials on minimal curriculum standards and on the scope and sequence for each subject for grades K-9, and they translated them into a set of *behavorial objectives* for all schools in the district. Thus, all elementary and junior high schools would have the same curriculum (for example, in science, English, math, social studies, and language arts) and at any given time during the school year, all 5th grade classes would have to be covering a particular portion of each subject. This is not to say that the schools were discouraged from doing more than that, but it did establish *minimal standards*. And the district office met with every principal and with teachers to inform them of this strategy and get the CLOs program underway.

This strategy thus provided much more structure to the curriculum than had existed before, and it did so with a strong emphasis on students mastering basic skills as well as covering core subjects. Many minority parents and school critics in minority districts, and not just in this one, had complained for years that their children were not being taught the basic skills, and this was a district-initiated strategy designed to rectify that.

Curriculum integration, as well as minimum standards and uniformity is also a goal. "We now have done a lot to integrate the work for any given time period for several subjects - science, social studies, English, etc." reports the superintendent. "If a class is working on a particular subject in science, we have the spelling, the social studies, and math all geared into that. So students will not write compositions in English in isolation from what is going on in other subjects."

There was much more to the strategy, however, than just establishing learning objectives. They were reinforced by several management control and support procedures. One was an extensive program of testing in each major subject, usually several times a year. The tests were a reminder to students and educators that the learning objectives were meant to be followed and the results indicated the extent to which students had mastered the basic skills and subject matter specified in the CLOs. Indeed, not only were the tests given on a regular basis, but the results were posted in each school to give much visibility to how well the learning objectives were being carried out. They were used as a measure not only of student performance, but also of that of teachers. On the other hand, ind-

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* It should be noted that the Central Board, in its Minimum Teaching Essentials program, begun in 1979-1980, followed this district's model.

ividual classes were not identified publicly. "We were more concerned with the school as a whole," reported a headquarters staff person involved in the program. "We never singled out teachers or classes for praise or condemnation."*

In addition, the superintendent instituted a practice of conducting audits of every school in the district. This involved the superintendent and a cadre of district office staff making an unannounced visit to the school, requiring that it be in a state of "constant readiness", lest they come on a "bad day" and make a negative report. The audit involved the group first meeting with the principals and APs at the beginning of the school day. They then got out a roster of all teachers and assigned roughly 6 classrooms to each member of the visiting group.** The visitors then went into those classrooms, also unannounced, informing the teacher that they were there as part of a district audit. They typically spent 20 minutes or so, making the usual kinds of observations: inspecting bulletin boards, assessing the preparedness of the teacher, the extent to which lesson plans were made up and followed, in particular whether the learning objectives were, the amount of student involvement in learning, the checking of homework, and the general climate (e.g., how much disruption, how much the teacher kept the students' attention, etc.). In addition, the visitors made similar judgements on a school-wide basis - observing student behavior in corridors, just outside the building, in the cafeteria, and other places.

The group then reconvened around noon, again in the principal's office with the latter and APs; and at that time, each member of the visiting group gave a fairly detailed summary of their observations. Nothing was put in writing, and the superintendent often made the point at these meetings that he was aware of the limited sample he and his group had taken of what was going on in individual classrooms and in the school as a whole, and that their observations were meant as suggestive only of remedial actions that might be taken. Some of the observations, he would often note, did not reflect typical conditions and behaviors and therefore need not be followed up on. Others, however, might well point to recurrent problems, perhaps reinforcing efforts of the principal and school staff to update classroom instruction. Sometimes, they reflected conditions the principal was already aware of and trying to improve, and in other cases, they constituted entirely new information that it was important for the principal to have. In every instance, the superintendent made it known that he and his district staff were available to help the school in taking corrective actions. And there was often some follow-up by the superintendent and his staff to see if problems were being actively dealt with. Thus, some schools where they found serious problems might be given a second audit later in the year.

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* The tests were instituted in November, 1978, a year after the project's inception.

** There were usually about 5 or 6 visitors.

Needless to say, the teachers' union has not been enthusiastic about this auditing program which its representatives see as limiting the flexibility and autonomy of teachers in the classroom. The ideology of teachers' unions is that they are "professionals" who should be given such autonomy, and the United Federation of Teachers in New York often expresses the common view. Moreover, teachers and their union reps often recall how teachers

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* The superintendent has recently introduced a new observational tool in the audits. "We assess the extent of student engagement in tasks within the classroom," he reported . "We have a series of observational categories to see how many in the classroom are engaged in learning tasks and what they are doing. We are using this also as a technique of teacher training."

used to be subject to arbitrary treatment by principals in the past, before the union was able to limit that through its collective bargaining agreement.* They saw the audits as possibly reverting back to such pre-union conditions. The superintendent, on the other hand, kept emphasizing that he saw the audits, not as a punitive device, but rather as a technical assistance one, to help teachers, APs, and principals in diagnosing situations, locating problems, and pursuing corrective actions.

One of the potentially most promising of the follow-up activities the superintendent has inititated in this regard is his marginal teacher program. He asked principals and APs in every school in the district to make a list of teachers whose performance was not what it should have been and who, therefore, needed assistance. He and his staff then made up a similar list, and there turned out to be a very high correspondence between the two. Both parties' meetings have been very well attended, indicating the strong interest that teachers in the district have in such assistance. There is also a Teacher Corps project in an elementary, a junior high and a high school, conducted in collaboration with a large university that includes a series of staff development (pre and in-service) activities, with materials made available in resource rooms in each school. And the district plans to include many more schools in the near future.

In addition, there is a cluster of activities run in collaboration with the New York Urban Coalition. One involves extensive school development efforts in which planning teams representing the key constituencies - e.g., parents, teachers, administrators, other staff, community representatives, and students - develop a comprehensive plan and individual programs for the school. Another involves developing a broad resource network of agencies and institutions in the district (business, labor, education, government, community service agencies) that then, in turn, help the schools develop programs.

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* From interviews with union officials. For a discussion of the professionalism ideology of teachers, see Dan C. Lortie's "The Balance of Control and Autonomy in Elementary School Teaching, " in Amitai Etzioni, (ed.), The Semi-Professions and Their Organization, The Free Press, 1969.

Still another recent effort is something the district calls a Vertical Incentive Programm focused on curriculum and organizational improvements in the district's elementary schools. It involves setting up a K-3 and grade 4-6 mini school in each of the elementary schools, allowing for much participation by teachers and parents in developing new curricula that are meant to reflect the particular needs of students as well as skills and philosophic preferences of teachers.

One of the most significant of all the initiatives the superintendent has pursued is at the junior high school level. In this district, as in so many others in New York and other big cities, parents sending their children to public schools opt out after the elementary grades (K-6). Then send them to private school, to a public junior high in a middle class area, or they move out of the city. It was clear to the superintendent, his staff, and his CSBs that many more middle class students, both black and white, attended elementary schools in the district than they did junior highs. Those from white middle class areas, in particular, left in large numbers, but so also did many middle class minority students. Their parents had no intention of sending them to "inferior" junior highs, with a low achieving and often "disruptive" student body. Indeed, they knew all too well what those schools were like, from their own past experience.

The inferior quality of the junior highs became such a big issue in the 1970s that there were strong pressures on the CSB to adopt a policy of accepting waivers for students to attend junior highs in another district. Many parents had already been sending their children to junior highs outside, and this waiver policy simply formalized that and made it legitimate for anybody. Even minority members of the CSB voted for the waiver.

The superintendent objected strongly to the policy, since it meant accepting the middle class's abandonment of the district as well as a public declaration by the district itself that its junior highs were inferior. As the district's educational leader, he got enough votes to eliminate this policy in the late 1970s, with the promise that he would embark on a strategy to significantly upgrade junior highs in the district. And many of his educational improvement efforts have been concentrated on this level. They include (a) the establishment of two new, alternative junior highs, with limited enrollments, and functioning much like mini-schools, with an enriched curriculum and extensive teacher involvement in developing it, and (b) the development of other enrichment problems in traditional junior highs as well, in the arts, science, the basic skills, and careers. Both approaches have been especially geared to preparing students for entrance into the city's elite, specialized high schools, and the record thus far of admissions has been quite impressive. It has increased from 70 in 1973 to over 300 in 1980.* While many of these specialized high schools seem to be more receptive to admitting minority students than before, all still maintain high standards, with students being required to pass an entrance exam at a particular level for admission.

In brief, several major inititatives have been taken in this district to substantially improve education. The superintendent has been the prime force in these efforts, and they have already had positive results. Attendance, reading, and math scores, and numbers of students admitted to the specialized high schools have all increased. **

It would be wrong however, to conclude that the first part of the strategy, namely, the learning objectives and various management supports and controls that have accompanied them, were implemented without some resistance by the educators. There was a fair amount of early resistance and complaint, both from teachers and principals, That seems to have been a function of two things: (a) the way the learning objectives were introduced and implemented; and (b) the lack of fit or congruence between demands made on teachers and principals in the program and their work orientations as "professionals".

Initially, the superintendent imposed the learning objectives on the schools without prior consultation from principals and teachers. Given the educational and political problems of the district which we discussed earlier, that strategy made sense. The district was in a state of crisis, and there was a need for bold initiatives. Had the superintendent begun the program on the basis of much consultation with the educators, the program might never have got off the ground. Instead he simply announced it and principals and teachers were told it would go into effect. Though their views were increasingly solicited after the first year of the program, on how it might be improved. The superintendent and his staff held meetings with prinicipals, teachers, and their organizations. In addition, a former teacher in the district was appointed as coordinator of the program, and she spent considerable time visiting schools, explaining the program, and dealing with teacher principal reactions to it. She encountered many negative

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* See the discussion below on trends in student performance in the district for a more complete coverage of what has happened there under decentralization.

** Again, the reader is referred to the section later on student performance for data on these points.

reactions at first, but over time, the amount of resistance seemed to decline.

It wasn't just a question of style of implementation that was at issue for the educators. There was also the matter of an incompatibility between the learning objectives approach and the orientations of principals and teachers as "professionals". The learning objectives reflected a kind of production management approach to standardizing the curriculum that was analogous to techniques used in industry where manufacturing operations are often standardized to ensure uniformity and consistency, as in mass production or automated operations. Notwithstanding the superintendent's rationale for applying the approach in this district - the nonexistence of any minimum standards that might be followed, the low expectations of some teachers, the lack of uniformity in curriculum across schools and even within them, the high student mobility, and the limited learning and teaching that seemed to go on - it didn't go over well initially with many educators.

Principals and teachers both had problems with the approach. Since this was a strategy to upgrade supervision and not just classroom teaching, several principals resisted it as a threat to their professionalism. What it implied was that they weren't doing the job they might have been doing, and for several principals that was not only difficult to acknowledge, but they wouldn't even acknowledge it at all. The problem was exacerbated in some cases by the resentment of principals that a headquarters staff person without a principal's license would be visiting their school to monitor how the learning objectives were being implemented. One old-line principal, for example, regarded it as an insult to her authority and long experience that the program should be implemented, that somebody should come from headquarters to monitor it.*

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* From interviews with headquarters staff.

Some teacher representatives also registered the program at first, perceiving it as limiting their flexibility and creativity in the classroom. As one teacher representative noted: "You are told where and when to teach, not just what to teach. It is a frame-by-frame procedure. This rigidity stifles the creativity of teachers." Another reported: "There is no room left for the imagination and creativity of teachers with the learning objectives. Teachers are frustrated by the fact that they are supposed to be teaching according to a very controlled and rigid time table. You have to move on, even if the child has not been learning what you have been teaching." While not all teacher reps felt this way, it was at least a prevailing view among many.

In actual fact, the learning objectives only set minimum standards. While they did specify the scope and sequence for each subject and provided time frames for different topics, they did not dictate styles of instruction to be followed, nor did they necessarily prevent teachers from going beyond minimum standards. The point was always made from the district office that teachers with very low achieving classes might have to deviate by omitting some of the learning objectives or modifying the timetable. What was stressed was that teachers with very low achieving classes might have to deviate by omitting some fo the learning objectives or modifying the timetable. What was stressed was that teachers should make these modifications in collaboration with their principals. In some schools, where principals were loathe to take on this responsibility that a modification of the learning objectives involved, there was often very little flexibility, and in that sense, the teachers reps' concerns were justified. At the many achools where there was early support, however, this was not a problem.

To summarize, the superintendent in District E has a very explicit educational philosophy that emphasizes a traditional, back-to-basics approach. It is supported by strong management control, through the use of learning objectives, audits, and extensive testing. It empahsizes standardizing the curriculum and raising teacher expecations. While that approach faced resistance from some teachers and principals, reflecting in part their "professionalism" ideology, it has moved ahead nevertheless, and there is more acceptance now than in the first year or two, for reasons to be discussed below. Most important, the approach may well fit the needs and learning styles of the poor, black students that this district serves.

(2) DISTRICT OFFICE AND SCHOOLS - As indicated in the introductory sections of the report, districts vary widely on the types of relations they have established with schools. Some have decentralized down to the school level, providing individual schools with considerable autonomy to pursue whatever educational programs their educators and parents regard as most appropriate. Some, by contrast, maintain much district office control over curriculum and instruction in individual schools. In District E, as in District D, though with a different style and philosophy, there is much central control over local school operations.

The learning objectives strategy and the monitoring and evaluation procedures are the main examples of that style. Audits and testing are extensive, as already indicated, and the superintendent spends much time, as do his staff, out in the field, observing schools.

There is, at the same time, considerable technical assistance from the district office. The audits have that component, as the district office staff note the strengths and weaknesses of each school they visit and attempt to follow up with assistance to those that need help. The marginal teacher program is perhaps the most extensive of these efforts, providing district office support for teachers whose performance the district office and principal have judged inadequate.

Moreover, over the past couple of years, the superintendent has initiated several programs with outside agency and funding assistance that have enhanced school-based planning efforts. The Local School Development program in 8 schools, the Teacher Corps one in several others, the Vertical Incentive Program in all 17 elementary schools, the 2 satellite junior high schools are all examples. In each case, it is the schools and not the district office who play the main role in developing curriculum. Teachers are particularly active, with the superintendent and district office functioning mainly as proposal writers, fund raisers, and providing other support services. This reflects in many respects a quite different approach from the more centralizing, top down one of the learning objectives, though even in the latter, classroom teachers were given considerable discretion as to how they taught. They were presented with a core curriculum and minimal standards, but they were not told that they had to teach them in any particular way.

(3) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF: Relations between the superintendent and his professional staff in the schools have generally been quite supportive, then, particularly in recent years when he has started many programs to increase school-based planning and expand professional development opportunities for teachers and principals. The Teacher Learning Center, for example, has attracted teachers to the superintendent's forums and workshops in large numbers. Moreover, teachers are encouraged to work in the district office after school and in the summer on refining the learning objectives, and the extend of teacher involvement in curriculum development seems quite wide-spread and increasing. Also, the big decline of

violence in this district's schools, probably a reflection in large part of its improved programs and of an increasing district perception that the schools have become more a community institution, have made teaching there more attractive than in the early 70s, when the superintendent first arrived.

On the other hand, negative feeling remains on the part of some union representatives and chapter chairpeople reflecting the past politics of the district and some of the superintendent's policies. Historically, this was a district with much hostility between the teachers' union and community activists. There was always a strong UFT slate in CSB elections, and the union has generally prevailed in getting many of its candidates elected and sometimes in bumping parent slate candidates off the ballot, successfully contesting the validity of their signatures. Even though the political climate of the district has changed markedly over the past several years, residues from the earlier period still remain, as union reps stay alert for possible CSB and superintendent policies that might encroach on teacher rights.

Furthermore, the superintendent did initiate the learning objectives strategy without consulting the union. And for some teachers and union reps, this constituted an unwarranted intrusion on their classroom autonomy and professionalism. It is doubtful that the program would have got started or gained much early momentum, had the superintendent followed a more participative approach but there was, nevertheless, some negative reaction as he and his district office staff had expected. "Somebody pays a price for creativity and leadership," explained a district staff person, "and we had to get this program started."

The other source of resentment from teacher reps was appointments to district office staff positions. Several were based, not on seniority, but on merit, as the superintendent brought in his own people to direct or coordinate programs. He selected several white educators as well as minority ones, so the union could not justifiably criticize him on racial grounds. But some union reps did resent the fact that "experienced" teachers who had been in the district for a long time were not as likely to get these positions as others with less seniority who the superintendent knew or who had come to his attention. These union reps claimed that there were "massive" numbers of people working in the district office, that some had not "distinguished" themselves as teachers, that many were "new" teachers, and that there was no reward for "real" merit. In actual fact, however, this district maintained a fairly sparse central office staff most of whom were able educators the superintendent had selected himself.

On balance, the superintendent's relations with the union are not as close as they are in several districts we have studied. He does meet with union reps on a regular basis, and they make numerous suggestions about educational programs, many of which he incorporates. At the same time, his management style has not involved consulting with the union in advance on new programs. And in a district where the union had traditionally been on guard against community activists and programs that might encroach on teacher rights, his style did not contribute to close district-union relations. Yet, the fact that education and classroom conditions have improved and that teachers are included increasingly in curriculum development and given much technical assistance from the district office, makes it unlikely that those union reps who are critical of some district policies will get strong support from the rank and file.

As for the principals, the superintendent has the same kind of relationship with them as with teachers. He meets periodically with their association, but he has not included it as a co-participant in the development of such programs as the learning objectives. He made it clear to his principals that he intended them to carry out the learning objective program. He did suggest at one point that the principals themselves audit the schools, but they understandably rejected the idea, feeling that it was too sensitive a task to evaluate one's peers in that fashion. He also informed them that he did not want them speaking up at open community school board meetings, asking for more services or resources for their schools. They were expected in this sense to meet privately with him to work out such problems.

The implicit trade-off for the principals was that the superintendent would defend them in public, where their school had become a target of community protest, provided he felt they were doing the best they could in that school. And there were situations where he did that, again trying to work out school problems with them in private.

The superintendent has, in addition, established an exchange or visitation program for principals and APs, as a technique of professional development that further enables him to diagnose and correct school problems. Each principal is assigned periodically to a different school, often for as long as two weeks, during which time the principal stays away completely from his or her home school. The school selected for the visit is not done so on a random basis, but rather in terms of providing a particular kind of learning experience that the superintendent feels the principal may need. As the superintendent reported: "I had one situation where a principal told me he had to run three lunch shifts. I didn't think that was necessary, and I told him he was in the food business too much and should get back into education more, because he was taking valuable teacher staff time to monitor the cafeteria. So I purposely sent him to a school where they only had one lunch period, and I never told him the reason for the assignment. It turned out that he got the message, and within two days after he was back, he had changed his three shifts to one."

APs also participate in the program, and some have gone to another school for as long as as two or three months. The superintendent has sometimes done this to "cool out" a situation of conflict between an AP and a principal.

An important benefit of this exchange program is that the superintendent gets to find out a lot about a school a principal has vacated, since a district office staff person is assigned to run that vacated school. The information feedback is sometimes valuable in the superintendent's providing further assistance to the school.

(4) DISTRICT OFFICE AND COMMUNITY: As in many poverty area districts, parent participation in this one has been limited. There are PAs in each school and a President's Council (PA presidents) district-wide, but they have been only selectively and minimally active until the last year or so. They have been involved in matters of principal selection and tenure and sometimes in curriculum, but that involvement has been sporadic. Indeed, participation was so limited in the mid-1970s, after the district settled down politically, that several previously active SCB members declined to run again. They cited their keen disappointment that there was no parent constituency to relate to.

The superintendent was generally responsive to parent concerns in the first few years of his service (1974-1977), but he did not make any significant efforts to get them involved more. He was busy building a staff and trying to get the schools stabilized so that he could move ahead of new programs. The CSB was also responsive to parent complaints, but it was not that open a body. Indeed, it held closed executive sessions, in violation of the state Sunshine Law requiring all meetings of public bodies be open to the public. Moreover, it has continued to hold such meetings away from the public, even when its staff and others in the district have pointed out their illegality. Its answer has been that these are just preliminary planning sessions, but the minutes indicate that they are much more than that. Basic policy issues are discussed that are of considerable concern to the public the district is serving.

In the early years of decentralization, parent participation was quite strong, mostly as a carryover from the activism around community control. Militant protests over the selection, tenure, and competence of principals, over the adequacy of schools, and over the unrepresentativeness of the CSB were common. During the period of the superintendent's selection (late 1973), parent protests became more institutionalized in various screening committees, and that quieted down much of the militancy.

Over time, other developments, some positive, some negative, limited parent participation. There were more minority staff in the schools and district office, and that was noticed. And the schools started getting better. On a more negative note, economic conditions may have contributed, as they probably did in other minority districts. Parents had less time for such civic activity in a period of increasing economic hardship. Also, the city's fiscal crisis was clearly affecting the schools, as parents could see that there would be less services than before. The prospects for reversing that situation seemed hopeless tomost parents who felt pressed by other concerns.

Parent participation in this district has increased significantly, however, over the past couple of years. New leadership emerged in the

President's Council, the New York Urban Coalition and other school-based programs got underway in several schools, and the superintendent has reached out increasingly to parents, through such means as his Superintendent's Forum where he invites parents to meet with him monthly to discuss school matters. The New York Urban Coalition has been particularly helpful in this regard. Its school-based planning program in collaboration with the district has brought parents into the schools and into school decisions in ways that go well beyond anything of the past. It also started a program to link the schools with community agencies, to develop more joint programs. And it has made its staff and facilities available to the President's Council for that group to become more organized.

One must be careful not to take too simplistic a view of parent participation, however. Limited public participation need not indicate that education is not proceeding well in a district. In fact, it may indicate that many past problems are being handled better, to a point where parents no longer feel a need to protest about the schools. Moreover, there may be a form of implicit or indirect parent participation in this district that may well be quite productive. The district has to some extent tried to develop more of a partnership between the school and the home, in which parents support the learning process through ensuring that books be taken home, that homework be done, that children attend school, etc. That is an important form of parent participation that provides a needed partnership in the actual learning process, rather than just in curriculum development. To the extent that it has been going on and increasing in this district, it may further enhance learning. Such forms of parent participation exist as a matter of course in many middle class homes, and an active effort to extend them to poor, minority families may well constitute a productive strategy for improving student performance. Our study suggests that decencentralization facilitates the establishment of such linkages much more than the old centralized system by bringing in superintendents, district office staff, and principals who are more community-oriented than their predecessors.

(5) DISTRICT OFFICE BUREAUCRACY: Relative to other minority districts, this one does not have that large a district office staff. Many administrators and curriculum specialists have been phased out since the fiscal crisis. Several retired and were not replaced, with their duties assigned instead to existing staff who simply enlarge their workload. This has happened all over the city in recent years.

The superintendent has a deputy who was acting superintendent just before he arrived, though she made it known at the time that she did not want to take on the responsibilities of the superintendency. One of the benefits of his having her as his deputy was that she knew the district and the New York City system very well and could perform many administrative tasks while he was getting to know more how things worked. Over time, an informal, but fairly explicit division of labor, developed whereby he delegated to her many routine administrative matters, e.g., staffing the schools, having them adhere to district and central board directives, etc., while he could handle the more non-routine policy and program innovation decisions. This is an arrangement that has been followed in several other districts and in this case it seems by and large to have met the needs of each participant (the deputy wanted not to be involved in district politics and policy controversies) as well as served the district.

In general, the district office is an important service center, in ways already described. It has also set standards and engaged in fairly close monitoring of what is going on in the schools. And the superintendent runs it in an informal, collegial way. While he retains his authority as the person mainly responsible for key decisions, he delegated a lot to his top staff, giving them much leeway for carrying out their functions.

Conclusions

To summarize, we have in this district a case where an "outsider" black superintendent in a predominantly black, poverty area district took many productive initiatives under decentralization that seemed to genuinely improve education. He was a strong superintendent who took on much administrative and policy authority, having moved into a vacuum of leadership that existed because of a divided and relatively inactive CSB. The many programs he initiated that we reviewed in this chapter constitute an impressive array of improvement efforts. Moreover, the superintendent not only initiated these new programs, but he was quite active on follow-up and implementation. He monitored closely how programs were carried out and made changes as new information on program results became available.

The superintendent's approach to innovation seems to have gone through two stages. The first, exemplified by the learning objectives strategy, reflected mainly a top-down, centralist style in which he made the key program and policy decisions and then explained them to staff educators in the schools. The second, much more pronounced over the past year or so, has been more bottom up, participative mode. Several programs have been developed at the school level, with the planning taking place there, mostly by teachers. Parents have also been given a more active role, and the superintendent has reached out to them increasingly, as he has to teachers. Even the learning objectives program now includes much input from teachers and principals as they feed back information to the superintendent on how things are working out. This second phase has, in turn, deepened the superintendent's base of support. And that was demonstrated most dramatically in the January, 1981 CSB meeting noted earlier in which several hundred parents charged the CSB with stalling on the renewal of the superintendent's contract. His contract has been renewed, and the superintendent has clearly established himself and his programs in this district, which has emerged as one of the most effective of the minority ones under decentralization.

Indicators of Student and district Performance

Having described the main curriculum initiatives the superintendent in this district has exercised, one would expect that they should be having some impact, and they have. At every grade level, there has been an improvement in reading scores during decentralization. Table 6.1 shows the scores in 1971 and 1979, with the net gain for each grade level. All nine grades improved, with the largest gains occurring among the highest grades that had been farthest behind.

TABLE 6.1

DISTRICT E
Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change (+)
Two	2.4	2.7	0.3
Three	2.8	3.4	0.6
Four	3.5	4.6	1.1
Five	4.2	5.5	1.3
Six	4.8	6.3	1.5
Seven	4.8	6.6	1.8
Eight	5.5	7.6	2.1
Nine	6.2	8.0	1.8

Like District B, described earlier, District E has outperformed the city as a whole in this regard. A comparison between city-wide gains and District E ones is shown in Table 6.2. At every grade level, District E did better than the city as a whole.

TABLE 6/2

Increase in Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	District E	Citywide	Difference between District E & All Schools
Two	0.3	-0-	0.3
Three	0.6	0.1	0.5
Four	1.1	0.6	0.5
Five	1.3	0.7	0.6
Six	1.5	0.6	0.9
Seven	1.8	1.0	0.8
Eight	2.1	1.1	1.0
Nine	1.8	1.1	0.7

The gains shown for District E are similar to those made in District B. Both had roughly the same scores in 1971, and both have improved to the same extend, through with quite different curriculum and administrative styles.

Moreover, the same arguments against alternative explanations, other than decentralization, apply to District E as they did to B. There has been no change in the socio-economic level of the pupils that wouuld account for the improvement. In fact, there is probably a greater proportion of poorer children in District E now than there was in 1971. And regression artifacts do not seem to be a plausible explanation, since the gains have occurred year by year. In any case, the pupils in District E were reading better in 1979 than they were nine years earlier, and it appears that this improvement was due to decentralization. More specifically, it was probably due, at least in part, to the educational and staff development programs described in this chapter, as well as to the administrative initiatives of the superintendent.

These gains, unlike in District B, are reflected quite dramatically in math scores as well. Thus, the gap between District E math scores for 5th graders and the city-wide scores has narrowed considerably from 1971 to 1978. In 1971, the District E score was 4.4, compared with 5.4 citywide, while in 1978, the difference was 5.4 for the district and 5.9 for the city.

Attendance data show the same pattern of improvement, relative to city-wide trends. In 1971, the city-wide figure was 83.6% average daily attendance, compared with 84.6% for the district. By contrast, in 1979, the city-wide figure had gone up to 84.2%, while that for the district had increased to 87%. Again, many of the educational program initiatives in the district probably had a lot to do with the improvements.

District E has put a lot of effort into preparing its students for admission to the city's specialized high schools, and that effort seems to have paid off. In one junior high school, for example, all 8th grade students are trained intensively in test taking techniques as well as in subject matter relative to the test for Brooklyn Tech, and then all are required to take it. Trends in the number of District E students gaining admission there show the results. In 1973, 48 were admitted to Brooklyn Tech, while 119 were admitted in 1980. These improvements held for the other specialized high schools as well, though the numbers weren't nearly as large. The number admitted to Bronx High School of Science went up from 0 to 3 during that period, from 5 to 6 for Stuyvesant High School, from 10 to 19 for the High School of Music and Art, and from 0 to 2 for the High School of Performing Arts. Considering the fact that this district has lost so many middle class students, that is an indicator that its improvement efforts have begun to pay off. Moreover, considering the chaos that existed in this district's schools in the late 60s, and through the early years of decentralization, we may well conclude that it is an exemplary case, along with District B, of a minority district where decentralization has contributed to promising gains in school and student performance.

Trends in vandalism rates are also significant in assessing this district's performance under decentralization. As we indicated in our earlier dicussion, the schools in this district were a focus of much community resentment in the 60s and early 70s. Fires, false alarms, and violence were quite common, and this was one of the more difficult districts in which to carry on any kind of orderly educational program, let alone embark on improvement efforts. Since 1971, however, those problems seem to have diminished quite substantially. From 1971 to 1978, the annual number of reported broken glass panes is down from 6,000 to 3,500; unlawful entries from 170 to 80; and fires from 5 to 2. The district's schools are now regarded much more than before as community agencies, as institutions in which local residents have much more of a stake and pride than before, and some of that may well be the result of changes we have described under decentralization.

We suspect that part of the improvement in this regard relates to trends in staffing patterns within the district, mainly an increase in proportion of minority staff. From 1971 to 1978, blacks have increased from 40.9% to 63.6% of the principals; from 20.5 to 34.9% of the teachers; and from 21.9% to 51.8% of all professional staff within the district. And the same trend holds for Hispanics, though the numbers are smaller, remembering, of course, that this is a predominantly black district. For Hispanics, this representation aong teachers has increased from 1.7% to 5.5%, most of them in bilingual programs, and for the professional staff in its entirety, from 1.8% to 6.6%. As we indicated in the chapter, this district has developed under decentralization an increasing cadre of black, middle class professionals. Many of them grew up there, attended its public schools, and are thus able to relate well to its students and their problems. Their employment in increasing numbers is probably a further contributing factor to the political stabilization there as well as to program improvements.

In brief, District E, along with District B, constitutes an exemplary case of what improvements are possible under decentralization. Many problems obviously remain, and decentralization has not been a panacea for all the ills besetting these districts. But relative to where they were before, as well as, we suspect, to many other inner city minority districts in New York and elsewhere, the school and student performance in these districts indicates significant improvement over the past decade. Such changes probably cannot be attributed to chance events and are more likely to have resulted from the many staffing program, and administrative initiatives pursued under decentralization and more specifically, from the management styles of these superintendents.

CHAPTER 7: District F

Poor Black District: Black middle class and poverty area district, with a remaining white (Hasidic and Russian Jewish) population. White middle and lower middle class moved out in the 1960s and early 70s. Turbulent, factionalized politics accompanying this ethnic succession has now stabilized and coalesced. Political peace in recent years, for the first time in two decades.

CSBs and superintendents have reflected community politics. District has gone through three stages under decentralization, with a different CSB and superintendent in each. CSB dominated in the first (1970-1974) by activist, white liberal majority and moderate blacks. This was a strong board that nevertheless delegated much administrative authority to an effective white superintendent, strongly committed to educational improvement efforts and to orderly ethnic succession on staff. A second, transition stage (1975-1977) in which emerging black political clubs, anti-poverty agencies, and parent groups moved into power, displacing the older coalition, marked by much turbulence. "Representational" concerns superseded "educational" ones, as these groups pressed for more blacks on the CSB and for more affirmative action in staffing, rather than have the older coalition act as their surrogates and impose its own definitions of orderly ethnic succession. Professionally and administratively oriented black woman who had been her predecessor's deputy, served as superintendent. Beaten down and finally ousted by her CSB, a majority of whom objected to her style of professional dominance. Most recent stage as one of political consolidation. Strong board led by a very strong president, has returned to more "educational" concerns. Recruited a black male educator from California as its superintendent. He and the CSB run the district in collaborative fashion.

Political stability among black organizations has led to collaborations as well with former antagonists, the UFT and CSA. The UFT now sees a "rational" and coalesced leadership group it can deal with, in contrast to the community control oriented board of the transitional period. CSB and superintendent agree not to violate union contract, in return for this political support.

Having settled down politically, the district is now identifying a coherent educational direction and programs. Its middle class black leadership group plus several capable principals and promising schools has enabled the district to regain its fairly high level of student performance of the early 1970s, compared with other black districts.

District F, located in an outer borough, encompasses poor, lower middle, and middle income minority communities. These communities are predominantly residential, composed of a mix of high rise apartments, brownstones, row and townhouses, and single family homes.

The district is a multi-ethnic one that underwent dramatic changes in the 1960s and 70s. What distinguishes its experience from that of other districts is that despite a big influx of blacks, the area has still retained its lower middle and middle class character. It now has one of the largest concentrations of middle class blacks of any area in the city.

The district contained a diverse mix of Jewish, [illegible] Irish and Italian residents in the 1940s and 50s. Beginning [illegible] 1950s and increasing through the 1960s and early 70s, the white population moved out to more middle class areas of the city and suburbs. The only significant exception to this outflow has been the settlement of Hasidic and Russian Jews in one part of the district. That area remains the center of New York City's growing Orthodox Jewish populations, and it contains the headquarters of the Labavitch, a powerful Orthodox group in the city. But even in the years just preceding decentralization, many whites still resided in the district. As an active CSB member who had lived in the district for many years explained: "In 1969, we still had an overwhelmingly white residential population, with an overwhelmingly black student population."

Residents moving into areas vacated by the whites have been predominantly black, accompanied by much smaller numbers of Hispanics and Asians. A significant portion of the new black residents are non-native Americans, having migrated from Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad, Barbados, and Panama. And coming from such different ethnic backgrounds, with different cultures and styles, these groups have come into conflict with American blacks over public school programs as each struggled for more and better services and for jobs under decentralization.

The ethnic succession within the district has been from north to south, and it has, for the most part, been quite rapid. Many blocks have experienced the familiar pattern of white flight and panic selling, brought on by blockbusting real estate agents. Moreover, the impact of the ethnic succession has spread well beyond the district's borders to the areas just south of it*.

All these ethnic and residential changes have had a big impact on district politics, though there was the usual "lag" period when outnumbered longer-term white residents still retained power. Thus, when decentralization began, there were still significant numbers of whites active in community affairs in the district. Many were executives, small businessmen, or professionals; they had themselves grown up in the community, and they had young families, with children in the public schools. Indeed, they were strongly committed to public education for their children and to living in integrated neighborhoods, and they saw decentralization as an opportunity for them to bring the schools closer to the community. This remaining white middle class, in fact, elected a majority to the first two CSBs.

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* See our discussion of this in Chapter 8 on District G. That is the district immmediately south of F that has also experienced rapid ethnic succession in the 1970s.

Statistical data on the district indicates some of the changes that have taken place under decentralization and some of the key problems. In the early years of decentralization, it was one of the few districts with a growing enrollment. In fact, it was the only district in its borough that increased in enrollment from 1970-1975, having gone up from 25,737 to 26,997 during that time. Since then, it has declined a bit, but the district has had a serious problem of overcrowding which has been a big concern of CSBs until quite recently. Thus, in 1978, the district had a utilization rate of 112%, one of the highest in the city. It has been able to get 3 new schools built since then and that, along with the decline in enrollment, has brought the rate down to around 95%.

As for the backgrounds of students, the district's predominantly black enrollment went from 74% in 1970 to an even higher 86% in 1980. Meanwhile, Hispanics dropped from 15 to 11.4%, while whites had all but completely left, declining from 9.3% representing that middle class group we just discussed, to 0.7%. District F has thus emerged as one of the main black districts in the city. Actually, it has by far the largest black enrollment, with none of the others even coming close.

Moreover, because of its size, it probably has the largest middle class and poverty background group of blacks of any district. While it has a large proportion of students from welfare families (classified as AFDC), that number remaining at just over 50% of total enrollment in 1970 and 1979, it is well below the proportion on welfare in the other black districts, which as a group average close to 60%. The remaining blacks, then, are not a welfare population, suggesting that at least some black working and middle class families send their children to the district's public schools. Many more do not, however, enrolling them in private and parochial schools instead, and attracting them back has become a priority for the present CSB. As one of its leaders explained: "Our black middle class has abandoned the public schools by sending their kids to private and parochial schools, because they feel they don't want to sacrifice the next generation to an inadequate school system. However, people have begun to realize that the public schools in a large way determine the character of a neighborhood, and if you want to have a poorly educated community, you do that by continuing to ignore the public schools and the problems within them."

Otherwise, the district is quite similar to other black districts in the composition of its staff. It has, along with them, a very high proportion of younger, inexperienced teachers. And it is very gradually acquiring more minority teachers. From 1971 to 1978, the percent of black teachers went up from 10 to 17 and of Hispanic from 0.9 to 2.8.

The main interest groups in the district have included Catholic churches (mainly the well-organized Holy Cross Church), Orthodox Jewish groups (Hasidic Yeshivas, synagogues, and the Jewish Community Council), the UFT, anti-poverty agencies, parent associations, and political clubs. Over time, the white religious groups have become much less influential, partly because of ethnic changes in the district and partly because it became increasingly clear to these groups that the CSB had quite limited discretion over how funds for parochial schools were to be allocated.

In the early years of decentralization, parent associations also declined in influence, while anti-poverty agencies, the UFT, and particularly the political clubs became increasingly powerful both in getting their candidates elected to the CSB and in shaping district decisions. That trend has reversed in recent years as black parent associations have become better organized.

Two prominent black politicians had their own Democratic clubs in the district, and they gained greater influence as time went on, with one of them getting elected to the CSB in 1973 and one of his associates and supporters becoming a very powerful CSB president in 1978 and remaining in that position on the 1980 CSB. There were, in addition, several black community activists from anti-poverty agencies who staged numerous protests at CSB meetings in the mid 1970s, demanding more black staff and much more "community control" over school and district decisions. Indeed, some of these activists pushed very hard during this interim period (1973-1977) to gain greater control, as the following brief history of CSBs will indicate.

History of CSBs and Superintendent - CSBs have gone through three discernible stages since decentralization began in 1970. The first may be characterized as one of early activism, led by a white dominated board in alliance with black moderates, the whites being elected with the support of Orthodox Jewish groups, the Catholic church, the UFT, and remaining white civic and parent association leaders. The second, beginning with the 1973 elections and continuing through 1977, is a stage of transition in which blacks gradually became the majority on the board, with 2 or 3 whites remaining but in a distinctly secondary role. This was a period of much turmoil, in which the legitimacy of both the CSB and its superintendent were increasingly challenged. The third begins with the election of a new CSB in 1977 and the departure of that superintendent a year later and may be characterized as a stage of consolidation. Here, blacks completely dominated the CSB, with several of them strongly endorsed by the black political clubs. As this group consolidated its power, the CSB has now turned back once again from "representational" to "educational" issues, with the UFT, ironically, giving its strong support in recognition of this board's dominance and its educational concerns.

The first CSB was composed of 6 whites and three blacks. Almost all of them were professionals or parents. Thus, it included an attorney, a physician, a black Methodist minister, a junior high school teacher, a college librarian, an executive, a bookkeeper, and counsellor in a narcotics control program. This was, then, a highly educated board whose members were dedicated to making decentralization work. Moreover, they had no ties to political clubs, having run for the most part as individuals committed to improving the public schools and to linking them more with the community. As one of its leaders recalled: "We were in our early 30s then. We came from different walks of life. All our minds were pretty much on the same wave length. We felt that we were really accomplishing things. The superintendent worked closely with us. We trusted him. The district office trusted us. They sought us out. We gave long hours of dedicated work, and we really enjoyed it."

Indeed, this board worked incredibly long hours to establish district policy and procedures and to secure a strong professional staff. As another leading board member recalled: "Our school board loved to meet. We met every night of the week. We would have met Saturday and Sunday if it weren't for the fact that ministers and rabbis had to devote time to their religious organizations. Our nightly meetings started at eight and ran past midnight. It's incredible that for five years, I spent at least four hours a day on school board activities."

This was the same kind of commitment, then, that we noted among the first elected boards in other districts, many of whom were also highly educated parents and professionals optimistic about the prospects of decentralization, and with fewer ties to political clubs than many later CBSs had.

The esprit de corps and sense of purpose of this board didn't occur overnight, however, as its members cautiously felt their way along at the start. Like their board colleagues in other districts, they were acutely aware of the fact that they were starting from scratch with no established rules or protocols. As one board member characterized: "We were a very young and inexperienced board when we first got together. We learned what to do by the seat of our pants. People weren't sure of how to work together. I remember the first meetings going very slowly, as everyone was wary of each other."

After going through a series of training sessions with a management consultant group set up by the central board, and after meeting with the old local school board, they agreed that they wanted to change the approach to education in the district. They wanted, in particular, to exercise their authority to select a superintendent, district office staff, and principals. One member recalled: "One clear sentiment of our board was that it wanted to alter the philosophy of education in the district. Although we didn't know exactly how to do this, we felt that one of the starting points was to attract different kinds of principals than had traditionally been recruited. We felt that an than had traditionally been recruited. We felt that an elementary school was a reflection of a principal, and there was an old saying in the district that, 'If this stinks, it stinks from the head down.' And it was our feeling that we had, in order to get change for the district, to replace the superintendent and the principals."

One of the CSB's first major actions was to replace its incumbent, pre-decentralization superintendent. He wanted to stay, but, like several of his superintendent colleagues who had also served before decentralization, he was both unwilling and unable to accept an increasing role for his community school board and for parents and community leaders. Board members characterized him as "paternalistic", as "inflexible", and as not open to "innovative programs". A board member explained: "It was almost pathetic. He looked down on us and treated us as if we were little children that had to be tolerated."

The superintendent the CSB chose was an able educator and administrator who had a very good reputation as a principal in a poverty area school, having restored order there and built up an excellent educational program. And he was to become an outstanding superintendent in the district for the next 4 1/2 years in which he served there. He was the first "new" superintendent to be appointed under decentralization, and this gave the CSB a strong sense of accomplishment as well as a reputation as intending to spearhead many reforms. "We were the only CSB at the time to displace an incumbent superintendent," reported one of the board members, "and this sent tremors through the district (among the professional staff). People perceived us as a renegade board, that we were in power to clean house and take off on uncharted paths. All of us were deeply involved in the community and got our civic consciousness through the civil rights movement, and by being on the school board we actually had an opportunity to develop new policies and make our presence felt."

After selecting the superintendent, the CSB drafted a constitution, making itself responsible both for developing policy and tending to its implementation. Since board members were young, had a lot of energy, and saw their board activity in idealistic terms as an opportunity to further their civic and civil rights activity, this made sense. "We were young, available, and had a lot of time we were willing to commit to school board activities," one board member recalled.

Following up immediately on such a commitment, the CSB assigned each of its members as a liaison to various schools. This enabled them to review programs and evaluate school staff, both of which functions they regarded as basic to the success of decentralization.

When the new superintendent took hold, however, the board became less involved in district administration. It realized the importance of having a professional educator run the district. As his administrative skills and educational leadership became increasingly apparent, the CSB limited its role to that of policy maker. The superintendent then developed his own extensive outreach strategy, as he and his staff set up a program to visit all schools in the district, observe teachers firsthand, and relate to active parent association members. Board members were pleased with this development. "The prior superintendent never went to the schools," one of them reported. "He had his office in a junior high school and never walked out of that during the day."

Another distinguishing feature of this first CSB was its concern for a more balanced ethnic representation. When one vacancy soon developed, as an elected board member was judged ineligible to serve, due to his employment in another city agency, the CSB filled it with a black woman. And still later, it chose another black to fill a vacancy. "So this was a majority white board," explained one of its members, "that chose to make itself a majority black board."

This was, then, an activist CSB, dedicated to decentralization, to improving the public schools, and to effecting orderly ethnic succession. It appointed an effective superintendent, and its members developed such a feeling of closeness to one another that several still see each other socially to this day. Three leading members were a white physician, a white attorney, and a black minister, each of whom served as CSB president during the period from 1970-1975.

It should also be noted, however, that this board's commitment to bringing in more blacks was made in the context of the district's increasing black population and to that group's increasing political pressure for more representation. And for many black leaders in the district, the first CSB's strategy of orderly ethnic succession was not at all what they wanted, since it implied for them too slow a process that they wanted to speed up considerably, and with blacks who they rather than this established power group chose.

While this group and their colleagues served the community well, by 1973, the district had undergone signficant changes in population and in politics, as just noted, both of which affected the composition and outlook of succeeding boards. Emerging black leaders in anti-poverty agencies and political clubs soon became well enough organized to exert increasing pressure on the CSB and superintendent. Some of these activists disrupted CSB meetings, with their demands for more parent participation, more appointments of blacks, and more "community control" of the schools. Spurred on by the example of the first board, which showed how the CSB could determine staff appointments, these activists and their organizations began to see the district as a political institution for black control as well as an educational one. They increasingly challenged the board's actions, while slowly organizing within their own ranks to elect more black CSB members. As one of the active members of the first CSB remembered: "The second school board had a very tumultuous time. One community person who became visible during that period was very negative to the actions of the board and demanding in his requests. He was so demanding that the board had one secretary working full-time, just getting information for him and for the board so that it could prepare for board meetings. The honeymoon between the board and the community was over. There were all sorts of disputes at board meetings. There were personality disputes, factional disputes. It was a difficult time. The second board marked the emergence of local politicians and of people who were less interested in education and more interested in building a power base."

Concurrent with this developing awareness and political organization among blacks was a reduction of involvement by both Catholic and Jewish parochial school groups, as they found that the CSB had limited discretion in granting funds to their institutions. Meanwhile, many more whites had moved out, completing a pattern of ethnic succession that had been underway since the 1950s. In some instances, spurred on by "blockbusting" real estate agents, whole blocks changed from white to black ownership in a matter of months. By 1973, most of the remaining white middle class had left, with the exception of one concentrated settlement of Orthodox Jews.

A key figure in this changed balance of power was a state senator who ran a powerful Democratic club in the area. He was elected to the 1973 CSB and pushed it to appoint more blacks as teachers, principals and district office staff. He also helped to replace white activist parents and professionals on the CSB with blacks. He and other black leaders no longer wanted either white liberals or less community control-oriented blacks as surrogate representatives of their community. And from the perspective of the latter two groups, this marked the beginning of the CSB's and the district's decline. "With this politician moving in," recalled a black board member, "things began to deteriorate. It was getting more and more political. As money started coming in from Albany and the federal government, it stopped being just a matter of education. The stakes changed. Jobs and patronage entered the picture. It was no longer purely educational, and this began to work against the best interests of the board and the district. It is important to find a way to made education again non-political." One of the white liberals who felt this change keenly explained: "The second school board marked the emergence of local politicians and people who were less interested in education and more interested in building a power base."

Another interpretation of these developments, however, was that they reflected the legitimate interests of emerging black groups for much more representation on the CSB and professional staff. Rather than representing a decline in the district, they were simply a change toward more affirmative action and ethnic representation. And rather than constituting a shift in emphasis from educational concerns to patronage ones, they simply reflected a new and different kind of politics. Indeed, advocates of this view resent the implication that when blacks gain greater power, education is suddenly seen as more political, as though schools are run in accordance with "higher", non-political goals when white groups are dominant.

As an example of this new politics, the district's main black anti-poverty agency group began to be much more openly critical of the CSB for not giving blacks more power and accessibility to district decision making. One of its leaders characterized the first CSB somewhat negatively as "provincial and professionally-oriented". The label of being "professionally-oriented" was applied in this instance in a highly pejorative sense.

A critical feature of the new, more politicized situation was, as some of the old CSB members bemoaned, the priority black leaders gave to using state and federal funds to secure more positions for blacks and more black control over district decisions. School board meetings soon became marked by increasingly contentious confrontations, as the still-active coalition of whites and moderate blacks from the first board fought back against community control advocates. This coalition was itself committed to the hiring of more blacks and to orderly ethnic succession, but it objected to what it regarded as the blatant patronage concerns and to the pressure tactics of the new community control advocates. The latter, in turn, saw that coalition as moving too slowly and as too deferrent to the educators.

One result of the new politics was that the CSB became highly factionalized, and its efforts to move ahead on such important matters as merit appointments of black educators, building new schools to relieve overcrowding, and supporting its superintendent's educational improvement activities were hampered by all these conflicts. Conditions degenerated to such a point that the CSB soon faced charges of corruption, abuse of district resources, and cronyism. The board was finally suspended, as the central Board of Education appointed trustees in 1975 to administer the district until a newly elected CSB took over in that year.*

All these events had a big impact on the superintendent who, in turn, resigned in late 1974, after being offered a high administrative position at headquarters. It wasn't a difficult decision for him to make, given the new politics on the CSB and in the district. The board's factionalism and the increasing power of its new, community control-oriented members had made it increasingly difficult for either him or the board to function with the effectiveness that they had before. As a top district staff person reported: "Starting in 1973, we had the politicians moving in. We had a state senator, and the clubhouse got active. The superintendent got along OK with this new board, but it had a changed thrust. It had moved away from being parent-dominated to becoming much more political. By 1973, the politicians realized that there were jobs to be given out, and they wanted to be part of that."

The new coalition on the CSB hadn't completely won out, however, and the board followed the first superintendent's recommendation of his deputy to be his successor. In appointing this person, a black woman who he had recruited to the district, the 1973 CSB essentially committed itself to continue having the district be run by a strong professional.

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* The CSB was dissolved and put into trusteeship by the central board when the wife of a prominent politician in the district was found guilty of ballot stuffing in the 1975 CSB elections. The court ordered a new election, and a central board staff person took over during the interim period.

That commitment was short-lived, however, with the election of a new CSB in 1975 that did not have a single incumbent from the first board. This marked the end of the white liberal-moderate black coalition, and it was the beginning of the end for the new superintendent. She tried to run the district as a strong administrator and educator in her own right, and that did not sit well with her board. From her point of view, the CSB wanted to be involved with day-to-day administration, but it didn't know how to go about it and, more importantly, it had no business doing it. From the board's point of view, she tried too hard to run the district herself, being unwilling to give the board an important role. One board member recalled: "When we started on the CSB (1977), whatever information I wanted I had to fight for. She gave us a hard time." A parent activist who later became a CSB member explained: "She was completely uncooperative. She wouldn't tell us anything. She wanted to run the district and set all policies."

One of her problems was her objection to what she regarded as anti-poverty agency and clubhouse politics intruding in district affairs. "I built up the parent constituency to counterbalance the poverty agencies," she explained. Given the emerging political situation we have already described, including the strong push for community control, her strategy was bound to backfire.

The action that may well have done her in was her decision to fire a community relations staff person at a time of fiscal cutbacks. All districts were being forced to drastically trim down their staff and she regarded this staff person's operations as of low enough priority to be curtailed. He had a teacher's license and got a job in a neighboring district. Unfortunately for her, he ran and got elected to her CSB in 1977 and convinced 4 other new CSB members that she was running the district with much too strong a hand and was not sharing enough information with the board. She refused to back down on her principles, however, maintaining that she had to run the district in a "professional" manner. The result was that they fought continuously. One parent leader complained: "The board was always fighting with the superintendent. A lot of federal money was lost because the board could not make any decisions."

A typical situation reflecting the CSB's increasing pressure on the superintendent was its continued demands at evening meetings that she put together information that would be made available to the board the next morning. She, her superintendent colleagues from other districts, and people within the district regarded this as "harrassment', but it continued through the end of 1978 when she left to take an administrative position at the Board of Education headquarters. "The board would ask me to provide information which would require me to work all night long to get it out the next day," she explained. "When I handed them the information, the CSB members wouldn't spend the time to read it. They set up committeds, but the CSB reps did not show up for meetings or do any work. When I submitted a budget or proposal for CSB review, it would take weeks for them to get it reviewed."

This superintendent might have been able to stay on, had she been willing to accept the board's definition of her administrative role which for her would have meant a sharp reduction in her authority. But by late 1978, however, her relations with the CSB had deteriorated to such a degree that she chose to take the central board job rather than continue. It is important to note that the CSB member whom she had fired and who led the coalition of 5 in pressing for a curtailment of her powers began attending fewer CSB meetings after she left. He had also come into conflict with the new CSB president, and at the last three CSB meetings in 1978, this CSB member referred to the new president as being "dictatorial", as a "puppet" of a key politician and as having "made a deal with the UFT."

The departure of this black superintendent and the rise to power of a new CSB president mark the beginning of the power consolidation stage in the history of District 17 CSBs. This president is a highly articulate, educated self-made black who had been a writer and now runs a profitable business in construction and community development. Having the strong support of a black politician, who had maintained his own power position in the district, this president has been effective since assuming that position in July, 1978, in coalescing this board and giving it a coherent direction and sense of purpose. He is an expert at the art of compromise," explained a CSB member. Another related: "He has been a stabilizing force. He has brought a sense of harmony to the board."

The president was largely responsible for the board's bringing in a new superintendent from outside the city. That person, a black, male educator from Los Angeles, began serving January, 1979. As the president explained: "I wanted a superintendent from outside the New York City educational networks who was going to be loyal to the CSB, not to 110 [the central board], not to the CSA, or the UFT. I wanted to have, first, an administrator who is by training an educator. He's going to be running a large system, involving a large number of personnel and schools. I wanted someone familiar with that kind of environment who also understands the importance of relating to a community school board and the community. The person we chose fits that description. The community school district is a $42 million corporation. It can't be run as a social agency. It has got to be run from the top down as well as from the bottom up. It must have clearly defined staff roles and clear objectives that are understood by all members of the district."

This most recent CSB, in collaboration with its superintendent, has moved the district in several important new directions. It has brought a new political stability that has established a more favorable climate for educational planning and improvement activities. It has developed a close working relationship with the teachers' union, another pre-requisite for district effectiveness, and it has redirected the board's priorities back to "educational" issues, e.g., to substantive curriculum and instruction matters, and away from "representational" ones.*

The new stability has seemed largely a function of the CSB president's and superintendent's political skills and leadership qualities and of the fact that the ethnic succession pattern had largely run its course. There had been some serious factional conflicts on the board when this president was first elected by his colleagues, but that is no longer the case. Now that black community control advocates have gained the power they had fought so hard for in what we have referred to as the transition period (1973-1977), the politics of the district have calmed down considerably.

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* Some black leaders in the district maintain that its CSBs have always had educational concerns, even in the transition period. But there was clearly a strong emphasis then on representational ones.

In addition, the CSB president has been very effective in gaining the support of the teachers' union. He has brought the union into district decision making, and he has moved to protect teachers from undue monitoring and surveillance by CSB members. The fact that the district's black leadership had coalesced around a strong CSB president who, in turn, had the support of a powerful state senator and his Democratic club, probably helped in this new alliance, since the union had a single group it could relate to, knowing also that the CSB president, its leader, controlled the group's actions vis-a-vis teachers.* "The CSB, under the direction of this president, has been particularly supportive of the UFT," explained a union leader. "It has been a major change over the last two years, since this board came into existence. He has been instrumental in getting the CSB and UFT to cooperate with each other. The UFT has become involved in some committees of the board, at his initiation. This has helped boost the morale of the teachers. We owe a lot to him. Cooperation has been building up. Grievances have decreased, and there are less contractual violations. There is the understanding by principals that the superintendent and the CSB will not support violations of the contract." Another union official explained: "Before this president, there were a lot of bad feelings between the CSB and UFT. CSB members used to walk into schools unannounced to observe teachers in classrooms. The UFT strongly objected to it. He put a stop to that. He has been extremely important in calming things down, so now everyone works together for the common cause of educating the children. Rather than the CSB and UFT being adversaries, we are in the same struggle."

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* The union reportedly also liked to maintain allegiances with legislators who were powerful in Albany, which is where the main legislative battles are waged over the governance of the New York City schools and over decentralization.

A different interpretation of the collaborative relationship between the UFT and CSB that nevertheless acknowledges its existence comes from the district'a black leadership. "Rather than say that the CSB has been particularly supportive of the UFT," explained one such leader, "it is more accurate to say that the CSB demonstrated it wants control and has gained UFT respect. Over the past three years, there has been a working relation, rather than a hard and fast confrontation. Yes, the CSB president has championed the needs of teachers in programs on student discipline and teacher training. Yes, the relation is one of cooperativeness and mutual respect. Yes, there are few contractual violations, but you shouldn't give the impression of more UFT power and CSB subservience to the UFT than is actually the case."

The other main development has been the increasing initiative taken by the CSB under the president's leadership and in collaboration with the superintendent in establishing educational policies and programs. The president has been very active, for example, in pushing the board to articulate some clear educational priorities. It is establishing district-wide curriculum objectives in all the main subjects to ensure uniformity among schools. It has set up school-based and district-wide curriculum committees composed of the superintendent, district office staff, principals, teachers, and parents to further standardize programs. It is developing a program to evaluate teachers and upgrade their quality. It has a major program for specialized junior high schools, with each oriented toward a particular career or curriculum area. It has begun developing more programs in black history and culture, including an annual district-wide educational conference featuring keynote speakers, and funded by corporations, foundations, and community agencies. And it has also begun trying to bring parents into greater involvement in district affairs.

All these educational improvement activities reflect the district's positive resolution of the many political conflicts that existed in its turbulent transitional period. Power had finally shifted to a new black leadership group. The CSB, having reached its goal of ethnic representation, could turn its attention more to education. Being more secure politically, its members felt freer to delegate more administrative authority to a superintendent with whom it maintained a much more productive and collaborative relation than did the previous board with its superintendent. And this present superintendent could begin to exercise educational initiatives that his predecessor could only exercise with great difficulty. In brief, many of the prerequisites for district effectiveness that existed in other districts that had successfully developed productive new programs have now emerged in this one.

Superintendent and CSB-Superintendent Relations - Though we have obviously discussed the role of superintendent in passing, some of the main trends in superintendent-CSB relations are important to highlight, as they help clarify the power balance and style that now characterize the district. At present, this is a district with a strong, education-oriented CSB that works well with an outsider superintendent who carries out its policies and has increasingly assumed more of a leadership role himself. This is how it was in the early years of decentralization, with a less representative CSB and a white superintendent.

The first superintendent was a strong administrator and professional educator who took many initiatives on his own in the running of the district. He and his CSB built up a trusting relationship almost immediately, and when it became apparent how effective he was as an administrator and educator, the board soon backed off from playing much of an administrative role. People closely involved in district affairs at the time -- e.g., parents, educators, CSB members -- speak with virtual unanimity about his leadership qualities. He spent an inordinate amount of time in the schools observing teachers. He made his district office staff do the same. And while he was not primarily a curriculum innovator, his strength being to consolidate and make more effective the programs already available from the central board and/or in operation, the resultant performance was quite impressive. Indeed, despite the district's big increase in poor, minority students, reading scores actually improved while he was there, making this one of the highest performing districts of its type in the city. As a result, he had a well-established reputation within the district, at the central board, and among his fellow superintendents as being one of the most effective in the city.

A selective sampling of perceptions from some district people reflects his style and effectiveness. One board member recalled: "He was a hard worker, a good administrator, and an excellent teacher. He was a teacher's teacher. He was well liked and very highly respected by everyone. He made it a project to be in the schools on a daily basis. He also encouraged his district office staff to be active in field work in the schools." A district office staff person related: "He put a lot of effort into it. He made the most observations of any superintendent in the city. He never told the schools when he was coming. He made a big difference." A principal reported: "He was always in the schools. He was constantly in classrooms observing teachers. He was basically a field person." As this superintendent himself reported, with considerable pride: "In my first year, I made 250 written classroom observations. Some people said it was just first year-itis. But in the second year, I made 300 classroom visits and observations. I saw all the probationary teachers at least once. By the end of my stay, I had made over 800 observations."

There was more to his leadership, however, than just visiting schools. He recruited an able professional staff of coordinators in math, reading, Title I and other curriculum areas. He adapted the central board curriculum for district use. He issued a curriculum guide to parents that informed them of what was going on in the schools. He reduced dramatically the amount of wasted teaching time in classrooms. And yet he had a close relationship with the teachers' union that respected him for his fairness and professional approach. His relations with parent gorups were also good.

In addition, he engaged in a constant search for able minority educators, reflecting in that sense the same concern for orderly ethnic succession that his board had. And his relationship with that board was a trusting one, as its members respected his honesty as well as his professionalism. "He was very staight with us," reported a black board member. "He was not afraid to tell us when he thought that we were off the wall."

One may characterize the district throughout most of his period of service, then, as *professionally managed by a strong superintendent*, with a *strong CSB that set policy but delegated much administrative authority*. As a new politics of ethnic succession developed, this superintendent and his old board were increasingly diverted from educational matters, and when he got the offer for a top position at the central board, it looked understandably attractive relative to his changing situation in the district.

The second superintendent, a black woman he had recruited into the district as a principal and later as his deputy, was also a strong administrator and respected educator, but the political situation had changed so much that this style was no longer acceptable to a new CSB that was increasingly oriented toward community control. She did, in fact, take many important initiatives. For example, she worked hard to standardize the curriculum. She organized Parent Advisory Councils for Title I and VII programs. She started an in-service training program and held many curriculum conferences. She also went into the schools often and made many classroom observations. And she tried to organize a parent constituency, as we already described above, to support her in these activities.

Many parents and educators within the district respected her for her strong leadership and regarded her as a competent professional. Many saw her as following in her own way a style that her predecessor had initiated. As one principal noted: "The first two superintendents were both highly professional, extremely competent, serious-minded educators. They came up through the ranks and believed in decentralization. They both made a very positive impact on the schools." Another recalled, "She had a style similar to his. She was always in schools. She was parent-oriented, very responsive to parents."

Over time, however, there was no way that she could sustain this style of strong professional leadership within the district. She was an advocate of professional dominance in a political situation where that was not possible. And when the community relations staff member whom she had fired came back as a board member to keep pressuring her to give the CSB much more power, she was unable to handle it. As board members put more and more pressure on her to provide them with information and to accede to their demands for more power in district staffing, budget, and program decisions, she, in turn, became more rigid and defensive. For her, it seemed almost a matter of moral principle to keep "clubhouse" and "anti-poverty agency politics" from intruding in educational decisions, and there was no way she could win her many battles, given the changing balance of power within the district. One local politician, in particular, was a formidable opponent, and he and his colleagues had much more power than she had. "They wanted her out because of the political machinery," explained a board member. "They wanted control of the district."

The situation at this point in the district's history, then, was one of a strong CSB that wanted control over policy making and administration and a superintendent who felt that the board had overstepped its power. Her departure in late 1978 then gave this CSB complete control. And when it selected an outsider superintendent, having consolidated its own power base beforehand, the district was assured that it would continue to have a strong board, but in a more stable relation with its superintendent, and that is where the district stands now.

SUPERINTENDENT's MANAGEMENT STYLE

Unlike the superintendents in other districts of our study, this one has only been in New York City a relatively short time, having been appointed, as already indicated, in January, 1979. The only other "outside" superintendent in our sample from District E, has served for 8 years and has therefore had ample opportunity to develop a style and have an impact on his district. Had we looked at his district at the same early stage of his service as we did this superintendent's, not enough time would have elapsed to develop that clear a picture of his role and impact. All these districts, like most large oragnizations (public and private), have a complex politics and set of traditions that limit a superintendent's capacity to have any significant leadership role until he or she adapts to those conditions and then establishes a political base. One of those conditions, in the case of this superintendent, is a very strong CSB and board president. And it simply takes time to establish one's authority in such an agency. While the board did renew the superintendent's contract in the spring of 1981, the discussion that follows on his management style must be seen in the context of his limited period of service as of this writing.

(1) CURRICULUM STYLE - District F doesn't have any single educational philosophy that guides its curriculum activities. None of its three superintendents has imposed one on the district, and the present superintendent describes himself as "eclectic". He is interested mainly in results and doesn't have any particular preference for one style over another. As he explained: "My feeling is that you have to provide as rich an array of alternatives as possible in the school and classroom. Whatever works, do it. Whether it is open education or traditional, pupil or teacher centered, do it if it works. But the most important thing is to get the basic skills developed."

There has been one consistent line of curriculum approach, however, since decentralization began, and that has been to move in the direction of standardizing it and making it more uniform. The first superintendent, for example, was somewhat of a traditionalist, relying heavily on the central board's curriculum materials and trying to improve on instructional efficiency within that standard curriculum, rather than experimenting a lot with new programs. His successor moved ahead with that strategy, by more explicitly standardizing the curriculum. And that work has gone forward under the present superintendent. "I think we should go with the minimum teaching essentials document of the central board," he said. "I use that a lot. It is my scope and sequence guide. I expect to find the curriculum in this district within that scope. If it is not followed, I will come down hard on that school. I will not question a teacher's style, but scope and sequence are essential for me."

There is also much emphasis in this district, as in many others, on basic skills instruction: in reading, writing, oral expression, math, etc. At the same time, there is at least a strong expression of interest on the part of the superintendent in developing student skills in critical thinking and problem solving, and in the arts.

Actually, the district has a fairly wide range of specialized programs. It has, for example, several magnet schools, zoned for the entire district. One is in bilingual education, and there are others in open education and the performing and communications arts. The junior high schools are where the most curriculum planning is being done in this regard, at the initiative of the CSB which wants to establish a series of specialized schools along various career orientations. The ones it has talked about include maritime and marine biology, health and the medical professions, aviation and aerospace issues, the arts and communcations, and a junior high school specializing in science. The district has been particularly interested in getting more of its students into the city's many high schools that specialize in these areas, hence its present commitment to try to specialize its junior highs along similar lines.* All of this is in the planning stage, however, and it has not yet been implemented, as of this writing. Some district educators, including the superintendent, are questioning the value of moving toward too much specialization at the junior high school level and suggest that strong consideration be given to providing a more basic, general education as well, or perhaps instead.

There is some question as to how far a CSB can go in planning curriculum developments, and that is an issue the district will have to work out. As the superintendent explained: "When I came into this district, the CSB was very active in doing things on curriculum. I feel the problem is not so much with curriculum content as with getting better instruction. Curriculum content is not that important. When I came in, the CSB presented me with a 2-foot high stack of papers on curriculum. They did put a concentration on that."

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* New York City now has, for example, Aviation High School, Beach Channel High School (for oceanography and marine biology), Clara Barton High School (for health professions), and Edward R. Murrow High School (for communication arts).

One important mechanism that the district has developed and that may play a significant role in future program development is its curriculum committees. Organized in each school and district-wide, they provide the potential for improved planning at both levels. Moreover, they constitute a vehicle for the district office knowing more what is going on in individual schools. "Curriculum committees are an excellent feedback for me," explained the superintendent. "'If you don't speak up,' I tell them, 'you will have to take the consequences of our making policy from the district office in a vacuum.'"

The other kind of curriculum initiative that the district is pursuing relates to black culture. One such effort is its annual conference series in which a major black leader appears as a keynote speaker. Another is to institute particular programs in schools. "We are working to create a sense of tradition among our students," explained the CSB president. "Many kids are not aware of their own history and culture. It will be the policy of the district to force our kids to learn and to have pride in themselves and in their culture. We will be giving competitions for students in public speaking, and the winners will receive the Malcolm X award. The students in this competition will be asked to prepare a speech either on Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Frederick Douglass, or Martin Luther King. All participants must do research on the four figures and their speech must reflect their contribution to black history and culture." Other competitions will be held in which students write a paper on major black writers and playwrights.

There is a fair amount of curriculum activity, then, that seems to have increased in recent years. Much of it reflects these general themes of standardizing the curriculum (scope and sequence), providing specialized magnet schools, and emphasizing black culture.

These activities have been undertaken through a collaborative effort by the superintendent and CSB. The superintendent has been responsible for formulating many of the programs -- e.g., the curriculum committees and black culture projects -- and for their implementation. But unlike in most other districts, the CSB and particularly its chairman have played an active role.

(2) DISTRICT OFFICE AND SCHOOLS - Under the first two superintendents, the district office played a significant and constructive role in relation to the schools. There was much monitoring and technical assistance, the two roles a district office would have to play for decentralization to go well. Both superintendents could almost be characterized as a single administration, with the second following through consistently on styles and strategies initiated by the first. Curriculum coordinators were always out in the field. In fact, the first superintendent forced them out and only evaluated their performance by what they did on site visits to schools. Each superintendent personally evaluated all principals, all new teachers, and all probationary and unsatisfactory teachers. Though superintendents in some other districts are out in the field a lot, also, the field emphasis of these two was quite marked. And it may well have had something to do with the performance of the schools in the district, whose reading scores were close to the highest of any poor, black district in the city.

The field style has been less of a priority of the most recent superintendent, who has played much more of a role as conceptualizer, strategy formulator, and central office policy analyst than his predecessors. The CSB has been quite concerned, for example, about securing more outside funding, and the superintendent oversees that effort. In the years just before the present superintendent arrived, there had been so much conflict within the district -- between the CSB and superintendent and within the CSB itself -- that the district had not effectively mobilized itself to write proposals and successfully secure funds. Its energies were diffused on internal politics, and it couldn't generate the consensus needed to set priorities and agree on an outside funding strategy.

The present superintendent and his staff are moving to rectify that, but, given the district office cutbacks in the fiscal crisis, there aren't enough of them to concentrate on that and still maintain the kind of monitoring and technical assistance field operation that had existed before. Several district office staff and principals expressed much concern about this. As one district office staff person related: "The superintendent has not been that concerned with our going into the schools, so I've stayed in the office a lot this year. He sees us as his in-house staff. We are to sit and write proposals to get money. But I see my job as being out in the schools. The principals depend on us, and we haven't been able to go to them this year." Another noted: "The superintendent is a very nice person, but he is a more district administrator. The first superintendent made the most observations of any superintendent in the city."

Several principals expressed a similar concern. "The first two superintendents used to visit the schools a lot," one of them explained.

"He doesn't come around." Another reported: "He has had minimal involvement in the schools."

While these comments of principals jibed with those of some district office staff, it is important to know the context in which they were made. One aspect of that was the strong concern the CSB had with securing more outside funds, a concern it passed on to the superintendent who, in turn, passed it on to his district office staff. And a second was the alienation of many old-line white principals and district staff about the CSB's and superintendent's staffing policies. Many of these principals felt that supervisory appointments were being made more and more on the basis of race and were therefore "politically" motivated. They regarded the CSB as "political" rather than "professional". And they saw the new superintendent as carrying out the CSB's policies that reflected, in turn, the affirmative action goals of black organizations. As one of these principals noted in summarizing his historical view of what had happened in this district under decentralization: "The first two superintendents were highly professional. And the first CSB was deeply concerned with what happened in the district. They were totally committed to education. Now it is more political. Many new CSB members have allegiances to a political party and little commitment to education. They've been making supervisory appointments on the basis of race, and that'a very serious thing to say."

These principals have considerable resentment about the fact that an "outsider" with no experience in the New York City system and no ties to its professional associations was appointed as superintendent in their district. And to the extent that this new superintendent spends less time than his predecessors in the schools, that only reinforces the alienation and hostility.

The feedback the superintendent does have is through the school-based curriculum committees and through his deputy and a few other staff people as they visit schools. The superintendent does make his own visits as well, contrary to what one might infer from the above quotes, though, again, his style is not as field-oriented as that of his predecessors. As he reported: "I visit about 3 schools per week. I spend about 1/2 hour to an hour in a school. I never announce my visits, so I want people in a constant state of readiness. I don't sign in at the principal's office, and I seldom ask a principal to accompany me. Then, at the end, I talk with the principal, and my deputy does the same thing. And when they see him come into the school, they see me."

To conclude, the district office has less of a direct, monitoring relation to the schools than it had in the past. At the same time, there remains some continued contact, despite the perception of several principals that that is not the case. Their perception is important, however, in indicating a generalized feeling of alienation that some of these principals have about developments in the district since decentralization. Their views are often couched in racial terms, and we would assume that the replacement of these principals over the next several years by others, both black and white, who are more sympathetic to the affirmative action goals of the CSB and superintendent would probably alleviate the feelings that shaped perceptions.

As for how much autonomy the schools have, the situation in this district is one of much decentralization to the school level, particularly through the curriculum committees. Each school more or less determines its own curriculum, subject to general standards developed by the district office. This has been reinforced by the present superintendent's eclecticism as an educator and his participative management style. The curriculum committees thus fit his style. As he explained: "My style is indirect. Unless you give people an opportunity to buy into and develop a stake of ownership, there will not be good implementation. I can be directive, but on big policy and program issues, that is not the way you get good implementation. I have set up curriculum committees that include a cross section of principals, teachers, students, and paras in each school. I am building a consensus through these committees."

(3) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF - One of the most important developments in regard to relations of the district office and the professional staff has to do with the teachers' union, as we already discussed. Much more collaboration now exists, as on curriculum committees and on others that the CSB has established. But that has more to do with district politics and CSB initiatives than with administrative actions of the super intendent. In fact, the teachers, as well as the principals, see the superintendent as a more distant and secondary figure with the CSB, and particularly its president, as the center of power. As one teacher spokesperson explained: "It used to be that the superintendents were very strong in this district. Now the CSB runs it."

The main pattern over the past year or two has been one of political peace and collaboration in relations between the district and its professional associations, reflecting a general development within the district. The result has been that the district and the union are able to work in some harmony on such sensitive issues as what to do with teachers rated as unsatisfactory. The CSB and superintendent have pursued a policy of fairness to such teachers, not just pushing them out and having it on their record for the future.

At the same time, the district is quite firm in getting teachers out who have not performed in the classroom and are not amenable to help through in-service training and more monitoring. It has spent a lot of time in training principals to document the charges against such teachers, and its experienced deputy has monthly conferences on it. The union, on its side, fights hard to represent its members, but its officials understand and respect the position taken by the district. As the superintendent explained: "The UFT understands that in this district we have a good relation with them, but if we get to the table, we mean business. We don't come to the table unless we have a strong case, and the union knows it."

(4) DISTRICT OFFICE AND COMMUNITY - One of the main priorities the present CSB has is to bring parents back into district and school affairs. That is very difficult to do in a poor community, with so much pupil mobility, and in a period of inflation when parents have to work more than before. In the 1979-80 school year, the CSB instituted a program that required the parents to pick up their children's report cards on open school day, to be followed up by a visit with the teacher. The general count was that roughly 18,000 parents came in, the largest number ever of parents showing much involvement. Allowing for some potential exaggeration in the numbers, whatever the turnout, it was quite impressive.

This program, developed largely at the initiative of the CSB president, was meant as a first step only in improving parent involvement. Pursuing the program showed a lot of leadership, because there was much anger and resistance by parents who didn't like to be "coerced" into such an activity and who resented having to be involved like that. As the president reported: "There is presently very poor parental attendance at school functions. In this district, we have 25,000 enrolled. That means that there is a population of some 50,000 parents who ought to be coming to schools, to school board meetings, attending school and school-related conferences and activities. However, we don't have that. In fact, last year, we had not more than 2,000 parents participating in parent association meetings over a term. That is simply unacceptable. To address this problem, we mandated that on the 10th and 30th week of each term, parents must come to school to pick up their child's report card or no report card will be given out. Oh, man, did I get a lot of flack on this. But I don't run a popularity contest in this district. I feel that if parents don't make the sacrifice to come to school to find out how their child is doing, then, how can you expect them to raise their kids? I am trying to find a way through using a carrot and stick technique to get parents involved more continuously over the year in parent association activities. Presently, we do this by appeal but I am trying to figure out a way to mandate parent participation in school activities, and when I do, you're going to bet it's going to be a model for the rest of this city."

The annual, district-wide conference and the various competitions that the district has been conducting constitute further strategies for stimulating parent involvement. Both have a central theme of black acccomplishments and opportunties in America, something that should attract more people. For example, the theme of the 1980 meeting was "black education beyond Bakke", relating to an examination of the potential impact of the Bakke decision on opportunities for blacks in professional schools.

This constitutes imaginative programming. And one of its potential benefits might be to attract more middle class parents back into the school, providing the programs in school are good and improve. The curriculum committees that have been set up move in the same direction. The CSB president summarized the philosophy behind these efforts. "One thing I've found is that in terms of decentralization," he said, "you just can't leave the public schools to the poor, because the poor aren't able to come out in the numbers that are necessary. And when you leave the public schools to the poor, that is when the special interest groups take control. And the only way that we can get around that is to involve the minority middle class parents who are able and concerned about their chlidren to come to our schools, and to work for the schools and for their kids."

Conclusions

This is a district, then, that has gone through much turmoil under decentralization but has nevertheless emerged with considerable potential. Under its strong CSB leadership and with an able superintendent who works well with the board, it has developed some approaches to improving programs and linkages between school and the home that may become models for the future. To repeat a theme that was discussed in our case analyses of other districts, these innovations seem to be a direct result of decentralization and have not been nearly as prevalent under the old centralized system. Boards and superintendents did not have the flexibility to develop the kinds of productive, black culture-centered programs, for example, that this district has begun to develop, as a way of increasing parental involvement and of linking the schools more to the home. In the past, if and when such efforts might be made, they would often have to be cleared through headquarters, with the possibility that some central staff persons, unfamiliar with the district's situation, might veto them or, at best, delay their implementation. Or they would have to be acceptable to the superintendent who, in this district, rarely, if ever, left his office during the school day, and didn't have much of a relationship with the community.

Notwithstanding all of the politics and problems that this district had in its turbulent "transition" period, it has thus emerged as a productive example of what decentralization may bring about. Its recent strategies are important to publicize and examine in greater depth, to show how they might be applied in other situations.

Indicators of Student and District Performance

We have described this predominantly black district as having gone through several distinct stages: (1) A first, through 1974 under a white superintendent and his integrated CSB: (2) A second transitional period from 1975-1978, under a black female superintendent when blacks were coming into power; and (3) A third, consolidation stage under a black male superintendent, with a strong, all black board.

The question is whether these trends have had much impact on student performance, particularly in view of the fact that the student population has not changed that much since 1971. At that time, 75.9% of the public school students were black, 14.8% Hispanic, and 7.8% white. In 1978, blacks were 85.5%, Hispanics 12.0%, and whites 1.1%. Most of the district's ethnic changes had thus taken place before decentralizartion, and the decentralization years simply represented the completion of a transformation from before.

As Table 7.1 indicates, the district's reading scores have improved during the period of decentralization for every grade, with the improvements as greater in the upper grades.

TABLE 7.1

DISTRICT F
Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change (-)
Two	2.5	2.7	0.2
Three	3.1	3.6	0.5
Four	3.8	4.6	0.8
Five	4.6	5.6	1.0
Six	5.2	6.4	1.2
Seven	5.3	6.7	1.4
Eight	6.2	8.1	1.9
Nine	8.0	9.7	1.7

In 1971, District F's reading scores were behind the averages for the city as a whole. Since then, the district has closed that gap. That is, the improvement in reading scores in the district was greater than that for the city as a whole. Table 7.2 points up that trend.

TABLE 7.2

Changes in Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	District F	Citywide	Difference between District F & All Schools (-)
Two	0.2	-0-	0.2
Three	0.5	0.1	0.4
Four	0.8	0.6	0.2
Five	1.0	0.7	0.3
Six	1.2	0.6	0.6
Seven	1.4	1.0	0.4
Eight	1.9	1.1	0.8
Nine	1.9	1.1	0.8

An important qualification should be made, however, in this regard, namely, that most (though not all) of the improvement in this district occurred before 1975. By the time the first superintendent left, this was one of the highest achieving black districts in the city. It may just be starting to regain its momentum, now that it has passed through the difficult transition period.

There is no similarly clear trend in math scores. The district scored at .4 of a grade level behind the city in 1971; and it was .5 behind in 1978. District scores seem to fluctuate in a way similar to those of the city as a whole.

As for attendance, the district has declined from 86.7% average daily attendance in 1970 to 85.3% in 1977. Meanwhile the citywide attendance figure has increased from 81.1% in 1970 to 82.8% in 1978.

Vandalism data show little trend, except on unlawful entries. From 1971 to 1978, the annual number of reported broken glass panes decreased slightly from around 4,700 to just over 4,000. And there were only 2 fires in 1971 and the same number in 1978. Unlawful entries, on the other hand went way up from 114 in 1971 to close to 200 in 1978, indicating that the schools had become a target in that sense.

A fairly significant change has begun to appear in the district's staffing patterns since decentralization, though it is not as marked as in some minority districts. Blacks increased from 10.7% to 33.8% of the total professional staff, and Hispanics from 0.8 to 3.5%. For the Hispanics the change was almost entirely at the teacher level, with only 1 Hispanic principal and no APs in service in 1978. For blacks, on the other hand, the increase was across the board. Principals went up from 17.7% to 33.3%; APs from 6.8% to 22.6%; and teachers from 10.7% to 17.1%.

Over 60% of the remaining principals are white, and for some of them, as our interviews indicated, serving in such a changed district with many more black students and staff is a more difficult assignment than they had faced many years before.

A basic question one must ask in regard to this district is whether it can regain its former momentum, now that it has gone through the difficult throes of its ethnic transition. For the last couple of years, it has stabilized politically under an able black superintendent and an active CSB. It remains to be seen whether this will be reflected, in turn, in student performance.

CHAPTER 8: District G

Formerly stable, white upper middle class district, undergoing rapid demographic change. "Strong" CSB, and experienced, politically astute "insider" superintendent, with traditional educational philosophy, flexibly applied. He pursued a style of responsiveness, balancing various constituency interests (educators and parents), and decentralization to school level. Thus, school-based autonomy and local option in curriculum as key aspects of his leadership style. Led to much diversity in curriculum reflecting a similar diversity in values of populations served. Efficient district office management, making increasing use of a computerized management information system for instructional (reading) purposes.

Neighborhood stabilization as an over-arching goal, reflected in district-wide desegregation program, supported by federal funding (ESAA), by programs for gifted and talented students, magnet schools, Pre-K and various other enrichment programs -- ecology, humanities, the arts, reading, individualization. Also much emphasis on special education. Curriculum emphasis on basic skills plus enrichment and individualization.

Our next district is in a rapidly changing area of an outer borough. When decentralization began, this was one of the most affluent districts in the city, encompassing elegant homes and a few remaining estates in the center, high rise apartment buildings along the main north to south arteries and a mix of expensive and more moderately priced homes in other areas.* The district includes one of the city colleges in the north, traditionally uninvolved until very recently in public school programs, and part of a national park to the south that is now used extensively for school activities. Observers of the New York City schools have often referred to it as the "Golden Gate" district, because of its past affluence. Many experienced teachers and principals looked forward to serving there particularly in their latter years, since students came in with few of the social problems and learning difficulties that are so prevalent in poverty areas.**

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* The only other affluent districts in New York City were 25 and 26 in Queens, including College Point, Douglaston, Little Neck. While affluent "pockets" existed in other districts, e.g., Riverdale, Pelham, the Upper East Side of Manhattan, and Brooklyn Heights, they constituted only a small segment of those districts.

** In recent years, however, there has been an increasing incidence of drug abuse, broken families, and delinquency among white middle class students in the southern part of this district.

Through the early 1960s, this had been an overwhelmingly Jewish area. There was also a significant Catholic population, mostly Italian and Irish, concentrated to the south and east, but they were in a distinct minority. There were roughly 15 parishes that had been in existence for many years, and they had their own network of parochial schools. Though precise enrollment data are not available, district informants indicated that most Catholic students in the district had attended parochial schools until the early 1970s. Since then, however, increasing numbers have attended public schools. District informants estimate that Catholics have probably increased from 15 or 20% of the total public school population in the early 1960s to closer to 30 or 35% at the present time.

The district has undergone major demographic changes since decentralization began, changing it from an atypically affluent, white area to a very heterogeneous one. It is in this respect a microcosm of an ethnically and economically mixed, inner-city district, giving our analysis broad applicability to the many others of its type, both in New York and elsewhere. The main changes include a marked exodus of upper middle class Jewish families to suburban counties (Long Island, Westchester), a modest influx of middle income Catholics, Blacks, Orthodox Jews, Chinese, Greeks, Hispanics, and a very large influx of poor blacks.

This influx of poor blacks, increasing rapidly since the early 1970s, has fundamentally altered the character of the district. It has resulted from several concurrent developments: the city's policies of vacancy decontrol for its high rise apartment buildings, leading to an increasing subdivision of apartments and to increasing numbers in each unit; the Welfare Department's policy of relocating displaced welfare families to the area, sometimes reportedly "bribing" landlords to take more of them, the white middle class exodus referred to above, including families with children as well as elderly residents; blockbusting and redlining, further accelerating the exodus and contributing to a decline in housing stock; and the construction of low income projects in the north central part of the district.

By the mid 1970's, the district suddenly had many poor blacks who immediately placed heavy demands on the public schools and other service delivery agencies and whose presence frightened many white middle class residents into leaving. Whereas before 1973, blacks attending district schools were mainly bussed in under open enrollment, it now had a large and increasing indigenous black population for whom it had to provide schooling. Other minority groups had also moved in -- Chinese, Greeks, Hispanics -- but their numbers were insignificant relative to those of the blacks. And because of that huge black influx and the white exodus, neighborhood stabilization became a major issue. Moreover, it wasn't just a racial matter, since middle class blacks had moved in also, many of them New York City civil servants, and they had a strong interest in maintaining good schools and not having the schools become like those in the black poverty areas from which they had just moved.

As one might expect, the classic condition of transitional inner-city districts soon emerged here. There was an immediate overcrowding of schools in black areas in the northern part of the district where the blacks had concentrated, while a few miles to the south and east, in areas with an aging white population, the schools were vastly underutilized.

The other important demographic change was the increasing numbers of Catholic families who had moved into formerly all-Jewish neighborhoods.

The Catholics tended to be less affluent and less liberal in outlook than their Jewish predecessors. And many of them sent their children to the public schools.

INTEREST GROUP POLITICS

The educational "power structure" of the district had been mainly Jewish in the years preceding decentralization, reflecting both the population who lived and went to public school there and those who served as educators (teachers, principals, administrators). As in District D, large numbers of Jewish public school educators live in this one, with many of them employed there. District informants estimate that as many as 8-10,000 New York City public school educators live in the district, making it a major UFT and CSA stronghold in the city and affecting its politics. Supervisors and district office administrators have been almost exclusively Jewish, as are the majority of teachers, the main reason being the cental board's traditional policy of appointing people to schools in districts where they lived. As one CSB member noted: "I remember one of my kids coming home from 2nd or 3rd grade and asking me: 'Mommy, is everyone Jewish?'"

As the district's population and public school enrollment changed, this old power structure came under increasing challenge, and with decentralization, Catholics gained increasing representation, both in parent associations and in professional educator ranks as well. More generally, several kinds of differences emerged that the CSB and superintendent had to handle. They include the Jewish-Catholic difference, racial differences, and geographic or sectional ones. These differences reflect issues of ethnic succession, the relative responsiveness of the district office to different areas (e.g., the northern area schools vs. those in the south), and the district's educational philosophy. Much of the politics of the district reflects the way in which these interest group differences have been managed.

The main groups include a Catholic lay organization; Orthodox Jewish organizations; parent associations; the teachers' union and principals' associations; political clubs; and community development corporations, representing civic groups trying to stabilize their neighborhoods in areas undergoing demographic change. These groups have been active in proposing slates of candidates for CSB elections, in staffing decisions, in pressing the district for particular educational programs, and in actually developing programs on their own. The groups are well-organized and have exerted much influence under decentralization. The only constituency not organized are the blacks who have just arrived. They are only beginning to get themselves together, through churches and parent associations.

One other interest group conflict within the district is between some parents and teachers, though that conflict is nowhere near as pronounced as in some minority districts. Nevertheless, various teachers' strikes -- in 1968 over decentralization and in 1975 over the union contact -- created divisions between the two. This took place, even when both were largely of the same ethnic background (Jewish). The conflict may have been somewhat compounded by the fact that the district has had many older teachers, some of whom had been transferred out from other districts where they had not received good ratings, while some were marking time until retirement. The more pejorative view of this situation was that the district had many "superannuated" teachers. Some of its older teachers are energetic and competent, and bring much to the classroom situation, but activist parents as well as district officials see a problem. Several CSB members have expressed much concern over the years about evaluating the educators' performance in the district and about removing incompetent teachers, and they have pressed the superintendent to do more on these matters.

Early Ethnic Differences - When decentralization began, the parent leadership in the district, supported by many district educators, did not want Catholics as CSB members. These public school parents and educators (PAs, UPA, UFT, CSA) were strong advocates of a separation of church and state and felt that no Catholic CSB member could easily separate religious interests from public school ones on matters relating to the potential non-public school use of public school funds and facilities. A big issue was the after-school use of public schools for recreational and educational programs for all youth in the community, regardless of whether they went to public school or not. Public school parents favored curtailing such programs where there was a forced choice between them and 9-3 PM public school ones, in a period of fiscal cutbacks.

The first major conflict between these Catholic and public school (mainly Jewish) interests emerged in the CSB elections of 1970 as related to the selection of candidates for various slates. As active members of screening panels, public school parents consistently ruled Catholic candidates off their slates. Several of the parents were active both in local PAs and in the city-wide United Parents Association (UPA) that had for years taken a strong stand against the use of public funds for parochial schools. Catholics who had been members of the local school board before decentralization, as well as those who had not, tried to run on parent slates and were turned down. They felt so disenfranchised that one of their group, a district leader in the southern part of the district, formed a Catholic lay organization, with its own slate. As one Catholic leader explained: "This organization came out of a sense of the importance of representation. We felt that the stability of any community depends on the quality of education there and we were part of that community. Catholics are an indigenous group who attend public schools. We were not moving in as foreigners. We had already been active in the community. Many of us had been fighting for better schools for many years before decentralization. The parents and teachers (UPA and UFT) looked on us with much disfavor, but it was a question of balance and representativeness."

They made a conscious choice to never run more than 4 candidates and therefore never have a Catholic majority on the board, and in the 1970 election and each succeeding one, they have successfully elected their 4 candidates. Decentralization thus opened up the public schools of this district to a broader religious and ethnic representation than before. And as we will discuss below, the Catholics elected to the district's various CSBs included some highly trained and influential people, e.g., several attorneys, educators, people active in labor and Democratic Party politics, and the deputy director of the Emergency Financial Control Board, formed to help the city through its financial crisis. That director was also a professor of Political Science at the City University and was later to become the Chancellor of the New York City schools. In addition, as we will also discuss below, the district selected a Catholic superintendent and several Catholic principals, the first time that Catholics had ever been selected for such positions.

Two main participants then, were a Catholic group who gained in power under decentralization and a predominantly Jewish group who were very influential at the start of decentralization and gradually experienced a waning of their power. The two groups had some major differences in values that have been reflected in a wide range of policy and program controversies under decentralization, including the selection of a superintendent and other staff, curriculum, tracking policies, and instructional styles. It would be incorrect to attribute this difference in values to religious background alone, however, since many Jewish residents had similarly conservative values as the Catholics, particularly those in the southern part of the district. Indeed, in one highly-regarded and effective southern area school an innovative, energetic Irish principal replaced a Jewish one. There were thus geographic and perhaps class differences as well that differentiated these groups from one another, with the liberal activist parents tending to be a much more affluent, upper middle class group than the more conservative ones. The big split in the district, then was between a liberal and a conservative group, with these groups tending to reflect differences in background, though with the qualifications just mentioned.

The conservative group, by far the vast majority, favors a more traditional and structured curriculum with an emphasis on basic skills instruction done in conventional ways -- through drilling and rote learning -- and with the educators in a controlling mode, encouraging orderly, compliant, rule-following behavior by students. They also prefer homogeneous classes, based on ability grouping, and they place a high priority on special programs for advanced, high achieving students as well as for low achieving ones. By contrast, the liberal parents favor open education, ungraded and heterogeneous classrooms, and such "progressive" approaches as "hands-on" and "experience based" learning.

As decentralization went on, it became apparent that the liberal parents of the district who favored these more progressive approaches to curriculum and instruction were in a distinct minority. They had formed around the PAs of a few key schools in the north and center of the district. Many of the PAs were similar to the upper middle class, professional and managerial groups found in such other areas as the Upper West Side of Manhattan, Riverdale in the Bronx, and Brooklyn Heights. But they increasingly became an anomaly within this more conservative district. They were an activist group who believed in strong parent participation, much more in the direction of community control than was politically acceptable to the majority of educators and parents in the district and certainly more than the CSB, the superintendent and his professional staff, and most PAs found accceptable. At the start of decentralization, these parents were in leadership positions in the district-wide council of PAs, but they never had enough grass roots support to prevail in their many battles with the CSB and the superintendent.

Over time, their power within the Council waned, and even before that happened, the CSB refused to recognize it as a legitimate body. While successful in pushing for progressive programs in their individual schools, they failed to get those programs adopted as district policy to be followed elsewhere, in more conservative areas.

The showcase school for these parents, which many of them regarded as the shining light of the district that they wished others would emulate, was located in one of the formerly liberal enclaves, adjacent to a city college in the center of the district. Its principal has been there since

since 1968 and is a strong advocate of open education. His school, referred to by his predecessor when he took over as a "silk stocking school with a run in it" had been undergoing ethnic changes in student enrollment (more blacks, fewer whites) when he arrived, and they have continued and accelerated since then, mirroring changes in the neighborhood. This principal has fought hard, along with liberal parent activists, to have his entire school reflect this open education philosophy, and the struggle that has taken place there reflects in microcosm many of the controversies in the district over educational philosophy and programs. The CSB and district office professionals have been critical of his policy of having the entire school in this one mode, arguing that his increasing minority enrollment is a direct result of white parents leaving in protest at not having the option of selecting more traditional classes for their children. In fact, the superintendent has given zoning variances to those parents who wanted a more traditional education for their children.

The principal's supporters, on the other hand, argue that he is by far one of the most creative and competent supervisors in the district and has been blamed for population changes that would have taken place regardless of how he ran the school, as witness the fact that they had affected all other schools in that area. His school is clearly one of the liveliest and one of the most innovative of any in the district. And this reflects his view that the curriculum should not just reflect parental values and style preferences but should rather provide the kind of education that the professionals feel is best.

The issue for this analysis is not one of judging who is right in this controversy. Both the principal and his critics are both right, in different ways: He for his dedication to an approach that has provided effective education to many students in the school, and the critics for their interest in being given a choice, rather than being coerced into a single mode. A solution for the principal would be to provide parents that choice by maintaining both open and traditional programs. But his dedication to the former, reflecting a professional judgment that it is far superior to traditional education and that it would be diluted by allowing both led him to reject that more pragmatic compromise. He is thus an example of an inspiring, creative, and able educator whose philosophy is not in congruence with that of many powerful groups in the district. And, of course, those zoned into his school who didn't share that philosophy felt their rights to have a program suited to their conception of what their children needed were being denied.*

Our main point in discussing this school at such length is simply to indicate some of the value conflicts in the district. Despite those conflicts and despite the fact that there has been so much opposition to the principal's philosophy and manner of running the school -- from the CSB, district office professionals, and from conservative parents -- he has continued on as principal and the school still has its comprehensive open education program. That says a lot about the way the district has functioned under decentralization and, in particular, about the management style of the superintendent, as our discussion below will indicate.

Statistical Profile - Before getting into those issues, a brief statistical profile of the district is in order. As community school districts go, this one is about average in size, having an enrollment of roughly 25,000 students in 1979-80. This constitutes a decline of about 4,000 since 1970, reflecting the experience of most districts since decentralization began, that decline being a function of the area's aging population and the moveout of many middle class residents. The decline has been particularly noticeable in the more sparsely populated areas in the south and east, and some schools there went down to 60 and 70% utilization. Even for the district as a whole, despite the overcrowding in northern area schools with their new black populations, utilization rates were down from 86 to 81.7% from 1970-75.

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* The superintendent had some hesitation, however, about requiring this school to have traditional as well as open classrooms, because of his strong commitment to integration. If both sets of classrooms were maintained, he was concerned that most of the remaining whites would select traditional classrooms.

Changes in pupil composition have been even more dramatic than those in total enrollment. From 1970 to 1977, whites dropped from 81.9% to 63.1%, while blacks increased from 13.8% to 25.3%. By 1979, blacks constituted over 30% of total enrollment, while whites had dipped below 60%. Moreover, changes in the socioeconomic status of students accompanied these ethnic ones. Those from AFDC families increased from 7.8% in 1971 to 15.9% in 1976, and that number is up even more since then.

The student population not only included more blacks and fewer whites, but it also became much more diversified. Some of the blacks, for example, were French-speaking Haitians whose values on education, discipline, and adult authority were quite traditional. And the district includes more Hispanics and orientals. Thus, there are now significant ethnic as well as socio-economic differences, whereas before decentralization, the district was much more homogenous in both respects.

While the student body has changed, the district has nevertheless held its own in terms of student performance. Thus, in 1971, 59.3% were reading at or above grade level, while 61.8% were in 1976. And that percent has increased since then.

As for the teaching staff, it has remained one of the more experienced and senior staffs in the city. This district, like those in other affluent areas of the city, is widely regarded among teachers as one of the most desirable in which to work, and the district has the third highest ratio of teachers who have served in the system for 5 years or more. In 1975, 90.35% of its teachers were in this category. Indeed, one common district experience that greatly concerns the CSB and the superintendent is for older, cast-off teachers to be transferred from other districts, having been encouraged to leave as a result of their poor performance.

CSBs and Superintendents - Since decentralization began, this district has had a series of active CSBs that played a major policy making role and on many occasions tried to play an administrative one as well. The board has always included 4 Catholics, one Orthodox Jew, and 4 others usually supported by the UFT, parent groups, and political clubs. Parent leaders have been conspicuously absent, with never more than 1 or two sitting on the board at any given time. The vast majority of CSB members have represented other organizational interests (religious, political, labor), though they have been responsive to parent concerns as well. But this has been more of a "power broker" board than many. One of its members has been very active in labor and city-wide educational politics (Messina) and another is now the Chancellor of the New York City schools (Macchiarolla). Moreover, there has only been one black member through the entire decentralization experience, and that person was appointed to fill a vacancy, rather than elected. Though he was well qualified as a parent and college professor, he was defeated by a big margin the one time he ran, begin supported mainly by a black constituency that voted in disproportionately small numbers relative to its place in the total district population or student enrollment.

The CSB has other characteristics as well that made it one of the strongest and most activist in the city. It has been a highly educated, affluent, professional group, relative to its counterparts in other districts. The first board, elected in 1970, for example, included three attorneys and several educators. Only one of its nine members was not a college graduate. Almost every member of the 1977 CSB, most of them re-elected in 1980, was an educator or the spouse of one. Three worked as instructors in colleges.

Related to their professional, educational backgrounds, these CSB members were also active in the civic affairs of the district as well as in broader, city-wide politics, and that has contributed as well to their power and influence within the district. As one CSB member related: "This district is successful because its CSB members are grounded in civic affairs, are sophisticated, well-educated, and capable." Notwithstanding the self-serving tone to that description, it is a valid portrayal of many CSB members.

Still another characteristic of this CSB throughout most of the history of decentralization has been its clear conception of its role in the district. Until 1977, when the CSB became less active and less assertive of its power, though even to some degree since then, it has made it very clear to the superintendent that the board makes policy and that the superintendent serves at its pleasure. As two CSB members from earlier boards explained:

> In the hierarchy of the school district, the superintendent definitely ranked below the board. It was a strong board.
>
> The school board is supreme in this district. It sets the educational philosophy.

This assertion of CSB power gained strong affirmation from 1970 to 1977 through its series of strong presidents, particularly one who is now the New York City Board of Education Chancellor. Though board members had different points of view on other matters, they maintained a general consensus on this one. Since 1977, with the CSB president's departure, this board, like many others throughout the city, has not continued to play quite so strong a role. It still oversees the superintendent and requires that he run the district in line with its many policies, but it gives him more autonomy and flexibility than its predecessors. It is in that sense not quite as critical about how he carries out district policies, and he many be doing more things on his own than before. The former CSB president's departure, the CSB's discouragement at not being able to accomplish much in a period of sharp fiscal cutbacks, and the general sense of boredom and fatigue of many CSB members who have served for so long may have all contributed to its delegating more authority. This CSB had 6 of its incumbents re-elected in 1975 all 9 in 1977, and 7 in 1980, and many seemed to be much less deeply involved in the position than their predecessors. One member expressed it very well: "We need new blood. Having been here for so long, we have become inactive. Too many board members are comfortable with the status quo. And having our former president as Chancellor at the central board reinforces that. Our board members don't want to challenge or question any of his policies, regardless of how they might feel in private about their effects on the district."*

In brief, the history of this strong board, probably one of the strongest in the city, has been one of being active in the early years of decentralization to one of discouragement and less activism in recent years. A combination of conditions idiosyncratic to the district and common to all districts seems to have contributed.

It is worth some mention to describe how the first board functioned, since it set a tone for later ones up through 1977, and since it reflected so much the spirit and hopes of many that seem to have been dashed in recent years. Its members were quite missionary in their zeal to make decentralization work for their community. It included 3 attorneys and several educators. As did their colleagues in other districts, they held endless meetings in their first couple of years, developing and codifying by-laws that were to establish district policy in almost every conceivable area of operations. If interpreted literally, these by-laws could all but usurp the superintendent's authority, which was generally what this CSB aimed to do. It was new on the job, idealistic about the prospect of decentralization, and bent on being the policy, administrative, and educational leader of the district. Indeed, this CSB saw itself as more than co-equal to the superintendent. One of its missionary-oriented members described their orientation well:

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* The fact that these CSB members keep running and getting re-elected suggests that as bored and tired as some of them may be with the position, it still has importance for them. One top district official had a possible explanation: "It may be," he suggested, "that they had decided that they had built up something in this district that they didn't want destroyed. When they looked around at who might run in their place, they concluded that they had to stay."

> We were like the founding fathers and a mother (one female board member). We were very productive. We quickly formed our committees and made our by-laws. We expended a phenomenal amount of energy. A tremendous excitement was generated. We were proud of ourselves. Every public meeting was a big show, and there was much excitement surrounding them. You could see history being written. Even though there was this whole business of parochial vs. public school interest, we were a very professional board, all college graduates. And even though we had different philosophies, we were together. At one end was a conservative Republican lawyer, educated at Harvard. At the other was a more radical parent, who came out of one of the schools in the center of the district, with active parents.

One of its first decisions was to select a superintendent. Like several other middle class districts, the CSB in this one opted to reappoint the incumbent. He had been there for many years and while some members questioned his capacity to serve effectively under decentralization, they did not want to embroil the district in a lot of political conflict early in their term, before they got themselves established. Moreover, since they were intent on leading the district, with the superintendent as their subordinate, they felt that they could control his actions. They would do so through establishing explicit district policy on all important matters.

It soon became apparent, however, that this old-line superintendent could not function well under a newly decentralized system in which he was acccountable to an elected CSB and had to be responsive to board and community pressures.* He was a strong believer in professional power, and that was incompatible with the position taken by the CSB and by many parent and community groups. Not surprisingly, the superintendent and his CSB soon developed irreconcilable differences over how the district should be run. On the matter of the superintendent's authority, he consistently refused to comply with the CSB's demands that he be accountable to them for his actions and that he develop procedures for evaluating his professional staff. He was behaving, in brief, as though decentralization did not exist, and it was clear that he would not last long under such circumstances. By the end of the first year, the CSB was already looking around for a successor.

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* This historical analysis comes from extensive interviews and from a reading of the very detailed CSB minutes. Those minutes, written up by a parent-oriented CSB member, contain a "blow-by-blow" account of the early years of decentralization in District 22.

A related development had to do with parent participation. Just as the CSB saw decentralization as a vehicle for establishing far-reaching CSB powers to run the district, so did many parents see it as a way of increasing theirs. They came into strong disagreement with the CSB on just what parent participation might entail. From the parents' point of view they wanted shared authority with the CSB on key district decisions, particularly those related to the selection of teachers, principals, and administrators. The CSB felt otherwise, preferring the term parent consultation to participation. The fact that the CSB included three attorneys of somewhat conservative bent and many other members with a similar outlook, concerned with establishing the legal authority of the board as a body, contributed to that reaction to such parent demands. Consultation for that board meant having parent input but not anything more, and certainly not shared authority.

While most CSBs in middle class areas took this position, it never went over well with the activist parents of this district, and there has always been a conflict between them and their board on the issue. In recent years, many of these parents have given up trying to deal directly with the CSB and superintendent and have worked through community development corporations to initiate new programs in individual schools. For these parents, the CSB and superintendent seemed like a replica of school headquarters and not at all in tune with decentralization. The parents were committed, as already indicated, to a concept that was much closer to community control than the CSB, superintendent, professional staff, and PAs in most schools wanted.

And yet the CSB did share some points of view in common with parents. It was very concerned with monitoring and evaluating the performance of the professional staff and pushed hard for its superintendents to do so. That issue has been a source of conflict between the CSB and its superintendent throughout decentralization, even as the composition of the board and its superintendent changed. So while the CSB was opposed to parents exercising controls on the professionals, it was not at all opposed to the idea as such. It just felt that it, rather than the parents, should be the one to do that.

A critical incident during the term of the first CSB illustrates well the forces operating in the district, as they affect how policy decisions are made and their substance. It involved the selection of a new superintendent.* Since the district's first superintendent bridled so much at being subject to the CSB's authority and to its constantly questioning his decisions on matters that he regarded as his "professional" prerogative, it was clear that he was not going to last. He was soon encouraged to resign, with appropriate face-saving devices. The fact that he was ill at the time made the whole process easier.

After much preliminary screening of candidates, the choice narrowed down to three, two of whom were acceptable to the narrowly-based liberal parent coalition with the third the overwhelming choice of the CSB, reflecting the preferences of more conservative constituencies. Though parent leaders made field visits and did interviews with the candidates, at the CSB's invitation, and in the company of individual board members, the CSB itself made the final decision. It announced the decision at a stormy public meeting in which these parents made angry protests and completely disrupted the proceedings on several occasions. These parents perceive, in retrospect, that the CSB had made its decision before the screening of the final three candidates, making a mockery of the extensive parent participation that was seemingly involved. As a parent leader reported: "There was heavy parent consultation and involvement until the final decision. All steps were followed appropriately, but it turned out to be just an exercise. We were terribly naive and idealistic. There was that feeling of hope. We came in with a philosophy. We were interested in changing those schools. They were dull and deadly, and we were very high on open education. At the CSB meeting where the appointment was to be made, we staged a big protest and wouldn't let the CSB speak. There was no parliamentary procedure at all. 'How dare you?' was what we said. We argued that their selection really doesn't know his own mind and besides is a Nassau county resident. It was a terrible meeting for the CSB. One of its members still holds a grudge to this day. The protesting parents were mostly from three elementary schools with a progressive parent body. The CSB then appointed its candidate and we didn't give him a hard time. We did have a grievance with the central board to get a clearer definition of consultation. But it left a residue of hostility toward those schools."

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* This became an issue after the first year of decentralization.

The person selected differed from the other two candidates in fundamental respects, further reflecting the values of the CSB and its constituencies. He was somewhat traditional in educational philosophy, though flexible and tolerant of other points of view, while the other two endorsed progressive approaches like open education and ungraded and heterogeneous classes. He did not enunciate any explicit or particular educational philosophy in public meetings or interviews just prior to his appointment, while both of them had an explicit philosophy that they did express.* He had the support of many established organizations in the district -- political clubs, the church that support having been mobilized by CSB members, while they were relative unknowns to such organizations. Coming from outside the district, he might have been a relative unknown as well, but the CSB had done a lot of preliminary work in paving the way for this appointment. Moreover, he had more administrative experience than they, having been the superintendent of a poverty-area district in elsewhere in the borough. While neither of them had ever served in that capacity. He was to become the senior community superintendent of the entire system, being the only one to have served before decentralization and throughout its entire history, and even in 1972, at the time of his appointment, he was widely regarded as a seasoned professional, having come up through the ranks and being intimately familiar with the workings of the system. Indeed, while superintendent in his previous job he had actively resisted attempts by anti-poverty agency activists to make staffing and program decisions in Title I and other reimbursable programs, thereby establishing himself as opposed to more than limited forms of community participation. His two competitors, by contrast, were more sympathetic with community control and certainly with parent involvement in educational decisions. Also, he was *a Catholic* of Italian origin, while his competitors were both *Jewish*.* Given the concern among CSB members and some power groups in the district with opening up positions to ethnic groups other than Jews, in a word, given their commitment to ethnic succession, the fact that he was of this background, in addition to having those other characteristics, was certainly in his favor.

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* One of his competitors reportedly realized that he would have little chance of being selected if he had too much support from the liberal minority that he could see was truly a minority, with little political power, and he tended to be somewhat less expansive and explicit about his open education and other "progressive" preferences as a result.

Some CSB members mentioned still other criteria as well for their e. One, relating to the superintendent's past experience, was that an accomplished fund-raiser, an issue of some importance in a middle class district not that successful in getting outside funding e past, in part because it had such small numbers of poor, minority students. A second was that the CSB has judged him to be a flexible person who would accept its authority and would not raise too many questions when the board chose to define that authority quite broadly. As one board member explained: "I wanted him because he was experienced, and I didn't think he would battle the CSB. I don't mean that he would be a 'yes man', but I knew he wouldn't battle us for control."

In brief, this superintendent had many background characteristics, skills, and orientations that the CSB valued, while his opponents did not. He was in that sense a person whose background and outlook *fit* the district's values, as this CSB interpreted them. And for him, it was a welcome change from a conflict-ridden district where there had been so many battles over community-control type issues to a more middle class one. "I kidded with him about it," explained a CSB member, "when we were interviewing him for the job, that he would rather switch than fight, referring to the old TV commercial."

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* Interestingly, he later hired a district office staff that was predominantly Jewish, some of them people he had worked with before. And he worked closely with the wide variety of Jewish groups in the district: Orthodox Jewish leaders, Yeshivahs, parent associations, UFT, and CSA leaders, etc. It was not known at the time of his selection that he would necessarily do this.

As for the liberal minority, it actively resisted the selection when it was announced and continued to do so for a week after that. Having failed to change the board's decision at the meeting that it disrupted, the parent group then sought a court injunction against the appointment. The judge overruled them, and the superintendent has remained in that position since then, having now served more years as a community superintendent under decentralization than anybody else in the system. Moreover, most of the parents who opposed his appointment either supported him later or at least maintained regular communications with him. Thus, though only 7 of the district's 27 PAs supported him at the time of his selection, all 27 did a few years later, at his contract renewal. He had done a lot in that period to "heal the breach", and his open communications with parent groups remain to this day. As one parent activist noted: "We don't agree with his educational philosophy at all, but he is a nice guy basically, and he is decent and fair."

The remainder of this analysis, paralleling those of other districts, will deal with the superintendent's management style, but since this has been such a strong board, a final word is necessary in characterizing its constituencies and style. Given the diversity of groups in the district -- religious, racial, geographic -- the CSB to a large extent mirrored that diversity among its members. Since it always had 4 Catholics and one Orthodox Jewish member, there was always the potential for a 5-4 split on issues relating to public vs. parochial school interest. The district's after-school programs, in particular, were a focus of internal debate and controversy. Some Catholic members resented the issue being defined as a public vs. parochial one, since they saw the public schools as a community institution that should be open to all local residents after school hours. As one member explained: "As a community person, I felt the community should be able to use the schools, and that means everybody. I remember when I was a kid, we played basketball in the schools, and we paid our small fee for the use of the gym for an hour or whatever our time was. The kids of this community should be able to use our facilities." Public school parents, on their side, argued that parochial school students could have attended the public schools and that the city's and district's limited funds should be spent on public school programs, from 9-3 PM, where there was such a great need.

There was also a split along geographic lines. The northern area of the district had become predominantly black, and it had one set of interests, relating to the need for relief from overcrowding, for additional resources for low achieving students, and perhaps for a desegregation program that would enable some black students to get an education in less crowded schools. The center of the district was in rapid transition, and many of its middle class residents, white and black, were deeply concerned with neighborhood stabilization. Two community development corporations had sprung up there, to provide some citizen pressure for improved housing, schools, and other services so that the area could retain its middle class. Finally, the geographically dispersed southern and southeastern part of the district, almost exclusively white and containing both young families with school age children and many middle-aged and elderly residents, was concerned about the district's rezoning its schools to bus in poor blacks from the north. Their fears were the usual ones of white middle class residents in such areas of what might happen to their schools and their neighborhood if such bussing plans went through -- fears relating to the quality of education in newly integrated schools, to school safety and security, to property values, and to the prospect that their community might lose its middle class and "tip", as those in the north had done and in the center were about to experience.

The CSB had to balance off all these interests, and one of the big problems in doing that was that its membership was typically overbalanced in favor of the south and center, as opposed to the north. The north had many more poor residents and many more blacks, and they tended to vote in lesser numbers than white middle class people in other parts of the district. Liberal parent informants were often quick to note that the north was consistently shortchanged because of this imbalanced representation. As one explained: "The CSB is dominated by representatives who represent the interests of the southern residents, and their attitude is only to give grudging attention to the north when it threatens the interest and security of the south. The north is weak in influence because it is much smaller in terms of voting power." Another noted: "The blacks are not well organized here. There is a lot of ESAA money for the bussing, and the funding is substantial. But the money is not for the north. It follows those bussed kids down, and the north gets shafted again. They lose by not having their rezoning plans accepted. They lose by having the district force its own plans on them. And then they lose by having the kids who stay back not receive the kinds of resources in their schools that they need." Notwithstanding these perceptions, the district does have many programs and services in northern area schools, and in that sense, the perceptions are not valid. Thus, one northern school receives ESAA money and is one of the district's 4 magnet schools; another is part of a program a local college, and the others are also helped by special programs.*

Indeed, one of the main characteristics of this CSB is that despite its members' differences in background, constituency, and philosophy, its decisions were often made with a broad district perspective in mind. That has been so in its handling of such policy issues as desegregation, the monitoring and evaluation of staff, and curriculum. As one former CSB member reported: "These boards, including the ones I served on, did not vote by any narrow constituency interest. And we were often quite united in our final policy." Another reported: "Many members of the CSB have come as professional educators, not as parents. They make policy based on what they see as the educational merits of the case." Acknowledging the self-serving nature of such comments, they jibe with our observations about this district. It had a highly educated and professional board that tended much more than most to take a broad, district-wide view on policy issues, rather than a narrow one. That is generally easier to achieve in middle class districts where board members have already attained high levels of income, status, and power than in poor minority areas.* As one former board member philosophized: "Our board was an intellectual group. People were obviously not there for what they could get out of it. If you don't need things you won't take. It's not really having higher morals. Even Thomas Aquinas says you can steal if you have to in order to live."

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* Indeed, the superintendent and district office staff maintain vehemently that the northern area schools are, if anything, given favored treatment. As one district staff person explained: "We always gave the schools in the north 1 or 2 extra positions, at a minimum, and they had more money for supplies and books. They also had a more favorable allocation of school aides. Those people who complain about the north being deprived would do so no matter what we did. If we were to leave the overcrowding there and give them more money, they would bitch about the overcrowding. And if we send the kids out and have money follow them, as required under ESAA, they bitch about that."

One possible exception to this observation relates to the CSB's active involvement in appointing Christian principals. The Catholic members and one former CSB president, in particular, felt that the district's staff should be more representative of the community. As a CSB member explained: "We had no Christian staff as principals, APs, or even teachers. Catholics who were graduates of good schools got nowhere in the system." Another reported: "Our district was totally Jewish at one time in its supervisory and administrative staff. That is not good." One result of this view has been the district's appointment of 4 Christian principals under decentralization, 3 Italian males and one Irish female. The fact that a powerful Democratic club located nearby and is actively involved in the district's affairs, that several CSB members have been close to that club, and that there is a strong Italo-American teachers' group in the district has contributed to this 3-1 ratio and to these particular appointments. This is not to say, however, that ethnic representation is necessarily against a broader community interest, in cases where the new appointees are competent. By and large, these new principals fall into that category, with one possible exception.**

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* By contrast, one top district staff person bemoaned the fact that the CSB in this district had failed to make policy on curriculum and educational programs.

** Moreover, 15 other principals selected since decentralization were Jewish.

The CSB and Superintendent - It should be obvious from our extensive description of this strong CSB that it would want to maintain much control over its superintendent, making certain that he followed district policy. And yet the superintendent it chose was a strong personality in his own right. The fact that he has stayed for 9 years and has consistently been given long renewal contracts indicates that the relationship has worked out satisfactorily for both parties. He has been willing to let the board play a dominant policy role, while the board has on its side willingly delegated to him broad administrative powers. As an example of the latter, on one occasion at least 2 CSB members expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the superintendent's selection of a person for a top district office position. They knew the work and reputation of the person in question and told the superintendent that it was from their perspective a "bad" choice. He respectfully disagreed with them and selected the person anyway, with their reluctant acceptance. "I told him that I always supported his right to make such administrative decisions," reported one CSB member, "though I thought this decision was a bad one."

Despite the general harmony between the superintendent and the CSB and the productive relationship that usually prevailed, there was a series of conflicts between them over the years that reflected an underlying difference in outlook. The difference had to do with his relations with teachers and principals, and to the style he used in managing them, evaluating their performance, and communicating with them about district policies. As the senior superintendent of the system, he had come up through the ranks as a teacher and principal in the New York City schools, had been active in the professional associations, and identified with the educators and their problems. He felt that one got the highest performance out of them when they were treated as colleagues and as professionals.

The CSB had quite a different outlook, or at least several of its members did. They felt that the professionals required strong supervision and were not always convinced that he was supplying it. They felt that he was too close and informal with his teachers and principals and did not push them nearly as much as they needed. As one of the more active CSB members noted: "He is too tolerant of some principals. He backs his professionals no matter how good their teaching quality is." Another stated: "He is the best superintendent in the city. His only fault is that he does not interfere enough with principals to get them to work harder."

One critical incident illustrates in extreme form the conflict that existed. At a private meeting of the CSB and the superintendent where the matter of his contract renewal was to be discussed, the school board president laid out a list of criticisms of th superintendent's performance, largely along the lines of his lack of strong leadership in pressing the educators toward a better performance. The president was an assertive person and had particularly strong views on pushing the professionals and their unions. He had opposed teachers' union strikes, one of which the superintendent had refused to break by crossing the picket line and keeping the schools open.* And he had been working in the Financial Control Board to get more productivity from city employees and their unions.

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* This conflict reflected major differences in outlook between the superintendent and the CSB president. As the superintendent explained: "At the time, when the teachers were complaining about the contract, they were making threats not to give out report cards, not to meet with parents, and not to attend open school week and open school night, and he (the CSB president) wanted me to head all this off at the pass. I told him no way was I going to do that. We had a basic philosophical difference on this."

His list of particulars included criticisms that the superintendent had not given enough staff supervision, had not evaluated principals firmly enough, did not have enough of a district office presence in the schools, and was therefore not leading the district as the CSB president felt it should be led. Since the president had not told any of his fellow board members in advance that he was going to present this critique, with the exception of one who rode to the meeting with him, his colleagues were taken by surprise. There was much upset at the meeting and the discussion ended with the president's proposal that the superintendent himself write an ad for the press, indicating that the district was considering applications for the superintendency, the understanding being that the superintendent would also be a candidate. Ironically, in the 5-4 vote favoring the proposal, the 4 who voted against were all Jewish members of the board, supporting their Christian superintendent. The ad was placed, but very few candidates applied for the job. Only one New York City educator reportedly did, a person who had habitually done so in many districts and had never been considered by them as a serious candidate. As the weeks went on, it became increasingly clear that the superintendent was the only candidate, and he was given another 3-year contract.

A general consensus among board members was that this was a largely idiosyncratic and symbolic act by a very strong CSB president to reassert the CSB's authority and to reaffirm to the superintendent that the board and not he ran the district. As one CSB member supporting the superintendent reported: "There was never any real challenge by the board about he continuing as superintendent. His record speaks for itself. What the board wanted to show was that he was accountable to it. He sometimes lost sight that he serves at our pleasure." Another board member who has supported and worked closely with the superintendent and yet voted for the proposal recalled: "The president presented these points to the superintendent from the perspective of 'these are the things I see as important. Now tell me what you have done about them. Implicit in the list was the judgment that we are not happy about your close relations with the UFT and CSA and that they know what you are going to do before we, your own board, do.'"

Since that time, there has never been any serious question on the CSB's side about the superintendent's overall performance or contract renewal, but there have been recurrent differences between them on similar types of issues. There have been conflicts over such matters as his not consulting with the board in advance on a decision to give a principal tenure; on his use of outside consultants from among his professional colleagues in universities; on his holding daytime meetings with his principals, thereby taking them out of their schools; and on his tendency at times, from the board's perspective, to only communicate decisions after he has made them. As one CSB member summed it up: "There was one case of a principal's tenure that really ticked the CSB off. The superintendent represented it to us as a fait accomplit, and the board president was fit to be tied. We had many moral discussions about it, since we didn't want to be unfair to the principal because of our anger at the way the superintendent handled us. He doesn't tell the CSB a lot of things. We go along with most of his educational programs, but he doesn't include us. The CSB president had decided that the superintendent, as the former president of the Community Superintendents' Association, sees things from that view. He is the senior statesman of the group. So we finally had the ads in the papers, and it brought up much unpleasantness. The CSB felt this is the only way we can keep him in line."

We have seen versions of this conflict in many districts, reflecting as they do the typical differences that often exist between superintendents and boards. And the fact that this superintendent kept getting his contract reviewed and has worked productively with his various boards indicates that the conflicts were not that severe in this instance. They seem mainly a result of a strong board and a strong superintendent trying to collaborate. Most of the time they do, and when they don't, matters tend to get worked out. Since the superintendent has the virtually unanimous support of his teachers, principals, and district office staff as well as of many parent associations and community organizations, he is likely to continue on in the position if he so chooses. A major issue in our analysis relates to how he has run the district, and it is to the matter of his management style that we now turn.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MANAGEMENT STYLE

The same kind of congruence or goodness of "fit" between the superintendent's style and the values and needs of the community that existed in Districts B and E, both minority areas, existed in this transitional but still predominantly white middle class district. Its superintendent was an experienced professional in a district where many educators resided as well as worked and where parents, teachers, principals, and CSB members were very vocal about educational matters. He was a competent administrator and astute politician in a district that contains many diverse interest groups whose competing demands had to be balanced and whose strong CSBs that liked to control things had to be handled. He had a somewhat traditional educational philosophy that matched the conservative values of a majority of the district's parents. Yet he was flexible enough to endorse those more "progressive" programs of open education and heterogeneous classes that existed in liberal pockets within the district. And he had considerable interpersonal skills and a civility that people in the district valued. As even one of his strongest critics from the CSB noted: "He is definitely a caring, considerate, warm human being, though from my point of view, he is no leader."*

In brief, under decentralization, the CSB in this district chose a superintendent with a background and a mix of skills and values well-suited to the district's needs. By contrast, the candidates not chosen did not match the district's needs to nearly the same degree. This is not to say that the superintendent's service has been without strains and CSB and community criticism, but the district does constitute another clear case of how under decentralization there was a good match between a district's professional leadership and its needs and values.

(1) CURRICULUM STYLE - Unlike in Districts D and E, whose superintendents had an explicit educational philosophy that they imposed to a large extent on the schools -- through their selection of principals, teachers, and district office staff, and through reimbursable programs and grants -- the superintendent in District G did much less of that. Indeed, he often went out of his way not to impose any single point of view, though he and his staff have pressed for IGC (intellectually-gifted children) programs for gifted and talented students, in an effort to retain and attract back

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* On this last point regarding his leadership qualities, to which we have already alluded in our analysis of the superintendent's conflicts with his boards, there were questions of management style preferences on his part and on the board's part to which we may now turn.

the middle class. Even in this case, however, the district office initiative in developing a program was in response to a strongly expressed need from white middle class parents for "advanced" programs and reflected a district-wide concern with maintaining an ethnic and economic balance.

Thus, though his personal preference was for more traditional approaches, emphasizing basic skills, structured approaches to learning, homogeneous classrooms, and programs for advanced students as well as for low achievers, he supported whatever programs the schools worked out, provided they got results. As the superintendent himself explained: "My philosophy is that if we are truly decentralized, I am not about to mandate from the district office an education philosophy. So long as the schools reflect the needs of their communities, so long as they have results, and so long as good education goes on, I don't interfere. Look at that elementary school where they have the open education and heterogeneous classes that the principal wants for the whole school. Despite it bothering me what he is doing, I let it go on. The parents there want it, and I will not interfere." One of the district's principals summarized this situation well:

> "In this district, we do not have an overriding educational philosophy. It is the responsibility for each principal in every school to develop their own programs more or less underneath the broad district objectives. It is recognized that every school in the district is unique and that the principals working in conjunction with their teaching staff and the parents association are pretty much in a position to determine what is best for them."

The curriculum style here, then, relates, as it does in many other districts, to the unique conditions within the district itself. More specifically, the district's curriculum reflects (1) the absence of any single educational philosophy imposed on schools from the district office; (2) a consequent diversity of programs in different schools, reflecting their *flexibility and local option*, as decentralization has been extended to the school level; (3) *a tailoring of curriculum and school improvement efforts to* broader social concerns of *retaining the white middle class*, *neighborhood stabilization*, and *desegregation*; and (4) a general district-wide emphasis, notwithstanding its local school option and diversity, on *basic skills plus enrichment*. The schools in this district have thus become an organic part of their community in ways that both reflect community values and support community development activities.

A visit to schools in the district reflects its considerable diversity, as principals, teachers, and parents have developed programs to meet their needs and reflect their philosophies. Several schools in the more liberal areas of the north and center tend to have more "progressive" and less "traditional" approaches. Some elementary schools with liberal parents and progressive principals, have thus gone into open education programs. The parents of one, for example, had pressed hard for a new principal in 1972, who was an open education advocate and one of the finalists for the superintendency, and he was appointed, replacing a much more traditional principal. The other finalist also an open education advocate, became principal a school with a similar parent body. Another elementary school in the same general area, and with a similar parent group, got a new principal in 1972, who also had a more progressive orientation, though combined with traditional programs as well.

By contrast, most schools in the conservative areas to the south and east have quite traditional, structured programs. Their classrooms tend to be run in more structured ways, with an emphasis on order, teacher control, and a traditional subject matter. And yet, one of the showcase schools in the south now has open classroom type programs as well, having formerly been a very traditional school that parents in the area no longer preferred.

In brief, the district has a broad panorama of educational programs and philosophies. Some schools are highly structured and run in a bureaucratic fashion, while others are much less structured and run in a looser fashion. The superintendent and his district office staff support both.

The district office does more on curriculum, however, than just support local option and diversity, despite the fact that it has so few curriculum coordinators left as a result of the city-wide budget cuts. It has secured state funding for extensive Pre-K programs, through an assemblyman from the district. It has secured a federally-funded ESAA (Emergency School Aid Act) grant of over $2 million in support of its broad desegregation programs. It has 4 magnet schools with programs for high achieving students, through grants for the gifted and talented. It has many media programs that the superintendent has provided for individual schools through a media specialist in the district office he recruited from the central board. It has an ecology center in the district office and ecology programs at a nearby national park, both of which may well be among the most unique and sophisticated programs of their kind anywhere in the nation. It has many retired and elderly residents working with its students as tutors. It is now part of the central board's Arts in General Education program and has poets, writers, dramatists, and other artists in district schools. It has developed a diagnostic prescriptive reading program with a computerized management information system that has data on students' reading skills and weaknesses and on the particular resources available for reading instruction in every school and in the district office (textbooks, audio-visual materials, etc). This has been used in the district's strong push on reading, as a support for teachers and schools. Teachers are provided information on students and on school resources before the school year begins, and this has much to commend it, as a managerial and instructional technique. It is rare in any school district that teachers have such information available so that they may plan an instructional strategy for each student. Even with this new technology, however, the superintendent and district office only recommend and urge its use, rather than unilaterally impose it on teachers.

Beyond that, there has been a strong emphasis in this district on special education programs that reflect the superintendent's particular interest in this area. Districts throughout the city have brought in special education students to underutilized schools, thereby preventing them from having to close, while at the same time providing a much needed space for these students. That has happened in this district, especially in its underutilized, southern area schools. And many educators in this district, like their counterparts elsewhere, would much prefer to have district and local control over the program, rather than have to deal with what they widely regard as a badly mismanaged central board division.

A central theme in the district's curriculum efforts relate to its push to retain its middle class in a period of sudden and rapid transition and to stabilize those neighborhoods that have begun to tip. The district office, in collaboration with individual schools, through an advisory council of district educators and parents has done many things to stem the middle class exodus. Pre-K programs, programs for the gifted and talented in magnet schools and others, extensive reading programs, IGC and SP classes for high achieving students have all been initiated, as well as such other enrichment programs as those in ecology, the humanities, science and the like. A few years ago, the district lost up to 50 middle class students to a neighboring district, as a result of the latter's new experimental programs, and in the last year or so, those students have returned in response to the district's new programs. There are also individual schools, some even in the north, that are attracting back white middle class students through their magnet and other advanced programs, after it looked like they would become virtually all minority student schools. These programs all reflect the district's concern with maintaining quality education for advanced middle class students, while pursuing equality-oriented programs for poor minority students. The programs may well have stabilized the district much more than would otherwise have been the case.

Moreover, community development corporations, a new phenomenon in the district, have also pursued some of these goals. Two recently formed ones have worked to stem the deterioration in their areas -- in housing, schools, and other services. One has worked with and elementary school and with the district office in developing a new Pre-K program, with federal funding. This group came into conflict with the district on its program, as we will discuss below, but both sides were involved in the same strategy of school enrichment to retain and attract back the middle class.

Perhaps the most significant of these efforts has been the district's desegregation program. It has involved the busing of roughly 1500 minority students from overcrowded schools in the north to underutilized ones in the south. In relation to this program, *zoning* has been by far the most contested issue the district has faced, with over 80% of public discussion at school board meetings focusing directly on it.

The program started as a particular solution to the overcrowding of one northern area school, and it later extended to several others. The first technique involved the use of *frozen zoning*, whereby new minority students in the school's area would be rezoned to southern area schools.* *Capping* was also involved, whereby receiving schools were only to receive a limited percent of incoming minority students, thereby minimizing the likelihood of political resistance, and of tipping, that percent starting at 5 and eventually rising to 15, as the numbers of bussed-in students increased.

Viewed in comparative perspective, particularly taking into account the actions of adjacent districts that faced many of the same demographic changes, this district developed a much more *proactive* approach than most. Though some liberal and northern area parents regarded the program as a band-aid and piecemeal approach. It may well be a model for other inner city districts facing similar circumstances, viewed in terms of political feasibility. Indeed, the CSB and superintendent went out of their way to anticipate many problems and to avoid the *reactive* strategy that other districts around it had followed. As one former CSB member with conservative attitudes on many policy issues recalled: "I was aware of how one district didn't do anything and what happened to them. I had been close to that situation and I had learned what happens if you don't stay on top of these integration matters. Our local school board in the 1960s were all concerned about what would happen on integration in this district and on how important it was to stay on top of this issue, and we carried on that concern under decentralization." Another explained: "The district took what I feel is a responsible course of action in establishing a district zoning plan before a court order compelling us to do something or panic and have white flight set in. In a nearby district, they have a CSB and a superintendent who have done nothing, and as a result, as each school tips and becomes 100% minority, the community around it has given up and fled to the suburbs. It is criminal to watch them wait for each school to tip."

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* The frozen zoning for that school includes whites as well as minority students.

Several ingredients made this a successful effort, combining astute district leadership with community involvement. The district developed the program with extensive parent and community participation. The bussed-in students were dispersed across many receiving schools, rather than concentrated in one or a few. In addition, the district secured large federal grants through ESAA that provided many services in the receiving schools for the incoming minority students, as well as for indigenous students needing help. A great deal of planning went into the program. There were many public and private meetings with all involved participants; and there was a lot of bargaining and political persuasion exercised by the CSB and superintendent.

Needless to say, many parents in the receiving schools were quite apprehensive about what might happen with the new bused-in students coming in -- about academic standards and safety within the school, about relationships between black and white students, etc. The district was effective, by and large, in assuaging these fears, in offering programs and resources for indigenous students (as the legislation provided), and in indicating to the parents the many costs of their not accepting the program, not the least of which was that their underutilized school might well be closed in the near future, given the city's fiscal problems. As one CSB member explained: "The biggest job is to sell busing to the white parents. We tell them: 'Accept minorities or have your schools closed.' We also use the extra federal dollars as a carrot." Thus, a combination of sensitivity to white parent concerns and the astute exercise of influence have made desegregation more acceptable in receiving schools.

Again some liberal parents in the central and northern area schools have been critical of the plan, calling it piecemeal, criticizing it for not being sensitive to the immediate resource needs of overcrowded schools in those areas, etc., but relative to anything ever tried elsewhere in inner cities, this may well be a model. The plan involved much community participation. It did not single out one or a few schools as the only recipients of bused-in minority students, but rather spread the program over many schools. It brought extensive resources with the minority students and provided some for indigenous students as well. And it clearly helped relieve the overcrowding in predominantly minority schools in the north, so that better education could take place there as well.

Like most busing programs, the main burden for travel in this one was on minority students. And some of their parents were quite apprehensive about what the experience would be like for their children, traveling long distances to a strange new school and neighborhood. Once they saw the schools where their children were traveling to, however, both the physical plant and the quality of the neighborhood and educational programs, their concerns in most instances were allayed.

We contend that this case has broad implications. What we have in this instance is a locally-initiated desegregation plan under a decentralized community school district system that went considerably better than the centrally mandated plans of the past. We say this based on the author's exhaustive study in the 1960s on centrally-mandated desegregation in the New York City schools. Indeed, it was out of the failure of those plans to generate much of anything that the demand arose in black communities for decentralization and community control. At the time, opponents of decentralization -- e.g., teachers, principals, school headquarters -- argued that it would lead to more ethnic separatism, as particular groups would work to consolidate their political power base in local districts. What went on in this district, however, is quite contrary to that prediction. Are they still right, with this being an atypical case, or can decentralization actually facilitate desegregation efforts, with the conditions that led to success in this district replicable in others -- showing further that "bottom up" strategies for innovation beat "top down" ones? We will return to this important theme in a concluding chapter.

(2) DISTRICT OFFICE AND SCHOOLS - Districts differ markedly in the extent to which they decentralize to the local school level. Some grant considerable autonomy to individual schools, while others are much more centralized, imposing many programs and rules from the district office. It is clear from the above analysis that this district's superintendent has pursued a firm policy of decentralization to the local school level. He has gone out of his way to allow principals and their school constituencies to make critical decisions on curriculum, rather than have them

mandated from the district office. We have found many districts throughout the city where school level educators have described their district office as a distant, bureaucratic body, much like the district, in turn, had usually described the central board. That does not happen in this district, where the superintendent has given the schools considerable leeway. This emphasis on school level autonomy has served at least two functions. It has given the schools much needed flexibility and responsiveness. It has also protected the superintendent, whether planned that way or not, from getting caught in an undue amount of crossfire between opposing educational philosophies and interests. He was going to get caught anyway, but allowing for local option was one political solution.

Indeed, there have been instances over the years in which activist parents have urged the superintendent to *mandate* on a district-wide basis policies that they felt were right -- for example, heterogeneous classes, open education, etc. He always argued that mandating curriculum and classroom organization policy from the district office was contrary to the spirit of decentralization. From their perspective, he was not exercising strong leadership.

A reluctance to mandate curriculum and classroom practice from the district office may still be accompanied by an active district office presence in the schools -- by way of technical assistance, staff development activity, and monitoring and evaluation. This district is hampered somewhat in these activities by having so few district office staff to engage in them. In fact, its superintendent had stated publicly his dismay at the fact that under decentralization and the fiscal crisis, the central board's curriculum staff have been sharply reduced, but so have those in the district office, leaving so much of it up to teachers, APs, and principals in individual schools.

Some curriculum support services are provided from the district office to those principals and teachers who will make use of them. The computerized management information system for reading instruction that we cited above is an example. The development of magnet schools, of programs for the gifted and talented, the media techniques, and other district office curricular materials are also provided to individual schools. And the district now has an advisory council of principals, the superintendent, and district office staff that is developing educational programs.

The superintendent used to meet monthly with his principals to discuss their many problems and try to assist them where possible. Many of them feel under increasing stress as they are asked to provide more and more services with less and less resources. Many are involved in busing programs, in breakfast and lunch programs, and in special education programs, though with fewer staff, and faced with continued parent complaints. They particularly resent the massive amounts of paperwork the district office asks them to do and the requirement that they make so many observations of their teachers.* The superintendent and his staff have been trying to help them with leadership training programs and additional resources, where possible. The monthly meetings have not been held since the fall of 1979, however, as the CSB ordered that they not take place during school hours.

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* A lot of the paperwork comes not from the district office, but from the central board. "The principals are asked to take down the name of every kid who is bused," explained a top district office staff person, "and to take down the distance from their home to the school. That was crazy to require."

As for monitoring and evaluation, that has periodically been a source of some conflict between the superintendent and the CSB as we have already discussed. Some CSB members felt more strongly about this than others, but the board as a body took the position that the professionals needed more pressure to make them more productive.

(3) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF -- Superintendents vary widely in the nature of their relationship with the professional staff. This superintendent has a close, collegial relationship with his staff and their associations, one of the closest of any district we obesrved, along with the superintendent in District D. These districts have several things in common. Both have a large, white middle class population, though District D has now has more poor minority students than G. Both have many New York City public school educators living there and have strong local chapters of their associations. And both have superintendents with long service within the system who had come up through the ranks and had been active in these associations themselves. They are in this sense "insider" rather than "outsider" superintendents.

Teachers and principals count as an important force in these districts. The superintendent relates to them as a senior colleague, providing much support for them, and indicating a considerable reluctance to evaluate and discipline them in a fashion characteristic of some parts of the private sector. For some critics of the New York City school system, as for example the Mayor, it raises a basic policy question as to whether such a superintendent style is compatible with an effectively decentralized community school district. It is certainly not compatible with the management and organizational models of either community control advocates or of many parent activists -- which is not necessarily to say that it is "wrong" but rather to indicate the different positions in the issue.

Interestingly, the CSBs of Districts D and G took diametrically opposed positions on this. The former generally found its superintendent's close relations with his professionals quite acceptable and even commendable, while its counterpart in G did not share those sentiments at all.

We have already reviewed the conflicts between this superintendent and his CSB on the issue and need only point up some of their broader implications. The view of several CSB members was that the superintendent had not pushed his professional staff to higher levels of performance, that he had not been critical enough in his evaluations, that he had not transferred out or retired teachers and principals who were not amenable to further training and yet were unable to perform. While one former CSB president expressed these views in extreme form, some of his colleagues on the board also shared them. As a CSB member stated: "He backs his professionals no matter how good their teaching quality is. He works well with the UFT. He does them many favors, but he never collects on them on important issues, like getting rid of poor teachers." What this board member and others were saying was that the superintendent was too easy on the professional staff and that he should be much tougher and less collegial in his relations with them. These board members felt that as a former teacher and principal, the superintendent identified too closely with his colleagues and did not exercise enough the authority of his office. Some board members felt that he informally consulted in advance with the teachers' union or school supervisors on important decisions, before doing so with his board.

The superintendent, on his side, felt these complaints reflected a lack of understanding of how one effectively manages professionals or of how the New York City school system actually works. As he explained: "Board members have asked: 'How come there are not critical things written on your evaluations of principals and teachers?' I act instead, and these board members don't understand the procedure. I take care of those things long beforehand. You don't wait until the last minute to remove a teacher or supervisor. Most are dropped long before then. Board members have also asked me: 'How come you don't bring up teachers on charges and give unsatisfactory ratings where they are deserved?' They don't understand that it costs $20,000 per case for every one you bring up. As for our principals, many have become shell shocked. Everything is coming at them at once. We have 1600-1800 bused-in kids and with a lack of funds we have no guidance staff. The CSB don't treat the professionals like professionals. I told the board: 'You want them to be professionals, and yet you treat them like babies.'"

There existed, then, a difference in approach and in ideology between the superintendent and some CSB members over how to manage the professionals. The CSB members wanted more bureaucratic authority exercised by the superintendent. They wanted him to make more forceful evaluations and take more corrective actions in cases of low level performance. The superintendent saw himself as managing a professional organization not a bureaucratic business one, with the former requiring different attitudes and actions on his part than would be required in running a business. He was more sympathetic than the board with the professionals' problems, identified more with them, and handled cases of low level performance in ways that maintained the professionals' dignity, while taking corrective actions where he felt they were warranted. One of the district's innovative principals who favored decentralization and who regarded the superintendent's approach as much more realistic and effective than the CSB's explained: "The CSB feels he doesn't step on us enough. They don't understand that he gets what he wants by calling in his chips, after being a nice guy and treating us like professionals. He could order us around like the CSB demands, but it wouldn't mean a thing, if it was not in the contract. He couldn't get us to do something that wasn't in the contract by ordering us to do it. But he gets things done by the force of his personality. And that is how power is exercised effectively here. He does more than the CSB realizes or gives him credit for. As for teachers, we have had unsatisfactory teachers who still remained. It isn't the superintendent's fault that he doesn't get rid of people. It' s the law that does. And there is such a complicated legal procedure that if you fold the paper of your complaint the wrong way, you lose. I know, because I was active in the UFT and CSA, and I lost badly on some grievances. The UFT really raked me over the coals on one case that I thought was air tight and well-documented, and I am a person who knows so many of the ins and outs of the system."

There is obviously no simple answer to this question of the most appropriate style for managing professionals in such a decentralized community school district system, with the answer depending largely on how effective the district is. In brief, the best style is the one that works, with the question then remaining as how one defines effectiveness. If one takes as the definition the performance of students -- through reading and math scores, attendance, etc., this district is doing quite well, having maintained its position as one of the top 3 in the city, despite its increasing percent of poor, minority students. And the fact that the district has maintained its position may well be a result of its many new programs under decentralization -- desegregation, magnet schools, IGC and gifted and talented programs, the diagnostic, prescriptive reading program, Pre-K, and the other enrichment programs already discussed. One could argue, of course, that more aggressive personnel policies might have given the district an even higher performance, and that is the CSB's position.

(4) DISTRICT OFFICE AND COMMUNITY - This district has had a mixed experience on matters relating to parent participation. From the perspective of activist parents, the district has been quite unresponsive to parent demands for sharing in important educational decisions. They feel that parents have been shut out by the CSB and superintendent and to the extent that all CSBs in the district have followed a policy of excluding parents from decision making authority, which they have, the parents are partly right. A sample of activist parent attitudes illustrates their views. As one complained: "Our district has cut parents out completely. There is no effective parent force in it. None of our CSB members are parent-oriented." Another reported: "There is no such thing as true parent participation in this district. We had no input in the IGC and ESAA programs." Or as a third bemoaned: "Parent involvement has regressed a lot here. The activists have gone."

On the other hand, there are some aspects of district-community relations that these comments do not reflect. The development of the district's desegregation programs involved a lot of parent participation, in both private and public meetings. Moreover, some schools in liberal areas have had much involvement of parents in the actual development of curriculum. They have traditionally had strong PAs who have been quite influential in their schools and whose expressed preferences have been taken into account in the selection of principals as well as in curriculum.

In fact, the whole school autonomy strategy of the superintendent was in the direction of giving a strong voice, not only to principals but also to parents. In that sense, the way the district is run has at least in part a built-in opportunity for parent participation in decisions affecting their schools.

An important condition in the district that contributed to this openness to at least some parent participation was the superintendent's limited parent support when he first took office. Since only 7 of the district's 27 PAs endorsed him at that time, he had to broaden his community base to be able to serve effectively. As he correctly noted: "I got in by a 5-4 vote, and I had to heal the wound over my appointment." Healing the wound involved, among other things, giving parents ready access to him, regardless of whether or not they agreed with his educational philosophy and district priorities, and many of the activist parents report that they do have that kind of access. Moreoever, the fact that the superintendent has appointed principals in some of these liberal areas with the same progressive philosophy as the parents and has allowed their programs to continue further indicates a responsiveness to their expressed needs. In general, the superintendent is more responsive to parents than the CSB has been.

A distinction must be made, however, between individual PAs and their district-wide group. As in most other districts, there is in this one a district-wide council for PAs. Until 1978, it included all the PAs in the district. At that time, a group of 5 PAs in southern area schools split off, forming their own group. They felt unrepresented in the Council and they had a particular concern with zoning and desegregation, since their schools were among the receiving ones under the district's busing program.*

Despite the fact that the Council still represents 22 of the district's 27 schools, the CSB has chosen not to recognize it as a legitimate parent body. Instead, it has established a policy of meeting only with individual PAs on particular school problems. One reason for the Council getting so little CSB recognition has been the leadership's support for parent candidates who usually lost and its opposition to the candidacies of powerful board members who won by big margins. Also, the fact that the Council leadership had traditionally included a small group of liberal activists who were very energetic in pursuing their interests further antagonized some CSB members. The latter often challenged Council leaders testifying at public CSB meetings, asking them who they represented, and implying that they represented only a small, narrowly-based group of activists like themselves.

The one development in the district that has contributed to what parent involvement exists is the demographic changes of recent years. Many middle class parents have been involved in trying to upgrade their schools because of their fears that the middle class would leave -- contributing not only to declining school programs and quality, but to declining property values as well. This was the impetus behind the formation of the parent group in the south, and it has affected other parents groups as well.

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* It is ironic, however, that their five schools have the fewest bused in blacks of any of the southern area schools.

The formation in recent years of community development corporations is a prime example of this phenomenon. They have been concerned with neighborhood stabilization, through upgrading the quality of housing and vital city services like education. One of these development corporations has been very involved in the schools, and it has worked to secure federal funding for a Pre-K program at one elementary school, to help retain its middle class students. One function of these development corporations has been to provide an avenue for some alienated parent activists to continue trying to improve the schools. As a parent explained: "The parent activists turned off by the school system are turning their energies toward the community development corporations." While the corporations are an outlet for such frustrated activists, the district office and CSB, as the recognized legal agency for the local schools, cannot be easily by-passed.*

In sum, while the CSB in this district has not supported parent participation to the degree that some activist parents would like, there are many active PAs in the district that play a role in the schools. And the fact that the superintendent has given the schools so much autonomy has provided more opportunities than exist in other districts for parent involvement. So while it is true that the CSB has not given many of the activists much of a hearing, it is not true that parents play a limited role in school affairs.

(5) DISTRICT OFFICE BUREAUCRACY - The district office staff is composed of a small, fairly cohesive group whom the superintendent has recruited and who are strongly loyal to him. This contrasts sharply with

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* A concern of the district office staff has been that the development corporation working in the elementary school just referred to wanted Pre-K programs just for that school, to the exclusion of others. "We have to develop Pre-K programs to include as much of the district as possible," reported a district administrator.

some districts where individual CSB members have exercised much more influence than in here in selecting staff, often by explicitly political criteria. The CSB members of this district deferred to the superintendent in these appointments, even when they disagreed with his judgment in the selection.

The result has been that he has a staff who work very closely with him and where there is no fragmentation at the district office level into competing turfs. Since the district has until recently received minimal reimbursable funds, given its middle class population, few positions exist in the district office. By and large, then, this is a district with a limited administrative overhead staff, and that of course makes it difficult for the district office and superintendent to provide the kinds of services to the schools that he would like. That is still another reason why local school autonomy makes sense for this district.

The superintendent runs the district office in an informal way. While there are explicit role definitions for each staff member, all of them have easy access to one another and to him. They function in that sense as a fairly collegial group. Several are long-time colleagues of the superintendent who he brought in from his former district. There are no problems of his lack of knowledge as to their activities or of his lack of control over what they do.

Conclusions - In summary, decentralization has had some discernible effects on District G. It has led to the development of a very strong CSB that has codified district policy much more than most and played a leadership role that was also much stronger than most. That CSB rehired its incumbent, pre-decentralization superintendent, but soon encouraged his retirement after a couple of years. The superintendent it then hired was similar to his predecessor in the amount of experience he had had in the New York City school system, but he was much more flexible and adaptable. The CSB had hoped he would be adaptable enough to accept its active role as the policy making body, and by and large, the relationship has worked out well. Some CSB members and parent leaders have felt that the superintendent was too close to the educators in the district, and they have not been reluctant to inform him of these views. At the same time, however, he has been there for 9 years, and they have been satisfied with his leadership.

One of his biggest strengths has been his interpersonal and political skills as reflected in his success in balancing off the many interests within the community. This is a district with many different religious and ethnic groups that required a superintendent with such skills. He has handled the Jewish-Catholic conflicts, for example, with considerable fairness and sensitivity. Racial differences have also been handled effectively, and the desegregation initiatives that this district undertook constitute a model for others. Certainly, when seen in comparative perspective, relative to other districts undergoing similar racial changes, this one has been much more proactive than those others and is widely recognized as such by the central board staff specializing in desegregation programs.

People in the district question whether many of its initiatives on desegregation or such other matters as securing state and federal funding for enrichment and supplementary programs (pre-K, gifted and talented) reflect the superintendent's or the CSB's leadership, since the CSB has been so active. While it is not easy to make any definitive judgments on this, the superintendent has certainly played a leading role and handled these matters effectively. There has clearly emerged in this district a good "fit" between district office leadership and the values and interests of various constituencies. In that sense, the CSB selected a superintendent who was good for the district, and the fact that he has stayed for so long and that student performance has remained high, even in the face of a massive change in student enrollment, indicates that the professional leadership has been effective.

Perhaps the biggest issues have been neighborhood stabilization and desegregation. Though it was quite unique before decentralization in its white middle class, affluent population, this district now faces demographic changes and ethnic conflicts common to many others in New York and elsewhere. It has sharp differences between different white constituencies, it now has black-white differences, and it has to deal with such issues as preventing further white flight, stabilizing transitional areas, and providing quality education to those schools that have become predominantly black and will remain so. On all these matters (with the possible exception of the latter) the district has done much better than most. It has been helped by the emergence of community development corporations that have taken an increasing interest in maintaining effective schools, but it has been effective on its own as well.

One of the other big changes with decentralization has been increasing representation of Catholics and of a more conservative constituency that had been shut out before. Decentralization has thus take power away from a liberal minority that had never had broad-based parent support. Depending on one's point of view, that may be seen as an important accomplishment under decentralization. The negative side of that change may be that some schools, reflecting as they do the values of local parents, do not have the kind of imaginative curriculum that they might.

Decentralization has also helped with desegregation and has made the district more responsive to black student needs than might have been likely under a centralized system. The district-wide desegregation plan initiated in this district was far superior to those the central board had developed in the past. It was developed with extensive parent participation, with extensive local knowledge and sensitivity, and the central board has never been distinguished by such efforts. The fact of the matter is that many black students are now receiving a better education in integrated schools than they would have received in overcrowded black schools, and the indigenous whites in those integrated receiving schools have not been short-changed. Orchestrating such a plan is no easy task, as the turbulent experience of so many inner cities since the Brown decision attests, and this success would not have occurred without decentralization.

In that sense, opponents of decentralization who had argued that it would lead to increasing ethnic separatism and segregation were wrong in this instance. The question may remain as to whether this is just a unique case where conditions just happened to be favorable and whose conditions and outcomes may never be replicated elsewhere. Our judgment is that many of these conditions and outcomes could be replicated elsewhere, and in our concluding chapter on the policy implications of the study, we will discuss that at greater length. The fact is that top down, mandated busing has almost never worked in inner cities, and yet an extensive busing program in this district did work. That it did so is a reflection of effective leadership from the CSB and superintendent and their responsiveness to community input.

Skeptics of what has happened in this district under decentralization may argue that it was hard not to succeed, given the large numbers of white middle class students who came to school with many advantages. The district would have had to fumble considerably, so such skeptics would argue, to experience much of a decline in reading, math, and other achievement scores of students. They also argue that the district could have taken many more initiatives than it has in developing an imaginative curriculum. The reason it has not been more innovative they continue, if one accepts for the moment their view that it has not, is that two broad, conservative forces exist in this district -- professional associations of educators, and conservative parents, many of whom prefer order, structure, and tradition, to programs that stress creativity, conceptual learning, and less structured approaches to learning. They look to the superintendent for much more leadership than they feel he has shown on matters of curriculum improvement and reform.

We see the issues as more complex than this kind of diagnosis suggests. There is a serious problem in a district like this of balancing off so many diverse constituencies - Jewish vs. Catholic parents, black vs. white, northern and central schools vs. southern schools, educators vs. parents. Handling all these cross pressures and maintaining some neighborhood stability and standards are big tasks, and the district has done quite well on them. One of the strategies the superintendent has adopted in that regard has been decentralization to the local school level.

That strategy has been quite effective in some respects and not as effective in others. The positive side is that schools have become quite responsive to local level need. Differences in values and learning styles among students, as well as in educational philosophies among principals have been respected, with school programs reflecting that. On the negative side, strong central leadership has not been as prevalent in curriculum development, though it has been on issues like desegregation.

We suspect that the issue is not one of the superintendent and his professional staff being unable to exercise stronger central leadership, but rather his philosophical preference for keeping district bureaucracy, mandates, and rules at a minimum, while enhancing flexibility and choice at the school level. And that strategy has a lot to commend it. Schools functioning under such a system will be more responsive to local need and preference than those subject to more central programs and controls. On the other hand, there are costs to such an approach. The schools are less likely to do much more than merely "reflect" local conditions. They will not be vehicles for change -- in values, perspectives, cognitive skills. And there may be many cases where the most status quo interests of educators, particularly teachers, prevail more than is desirable. this district, for example, is a place where many senior teachers serve, some of them unfortunately, just waiting out their years to retirement. A too common condition in New York and other inner cities, is for teachers to serve an early apprenticeship in a minority area and spend their later years coasting into retirement in a middle class one like this. Unless there are strong incentives and pressures for them to do a lot more than coast into retirement, unimaginative educational programs and approaches may sometimes prevail. It may not show, in the sense that children from advantaged backgrounds will continue to score reasonably well on standardized tests, but they may not be getting the kinds of enriched educational experiences that are possible.

In those respects, stronger central leadership in providing incentives and programs for staff development, in enriching the curriculum options for the schools, and in requiring higher levels of staff performance are all required. The union and principals' associations must be dealt with more aggresively to pursue such a strategy. Despite the many positive developments under decentralization, some of those tasks remain to be done. While it would be difficult to find districts in New York or other inner cities where these things are being done effectively, along with the many positive things already being done in 22, that would be the next step in making a relatively effective district under decentralization a very effective one.

Indicators of Student and District Performance

As we indicated earlier, this district has undergone sharp changes in its pupil population in the 1970s, with white middle class families moving out and with an influx of black children from poorer families. Under these conditions, it is difficult to assess the effects of decentralization on student performance. On balance, however, reading scores in District G improved. In five of the eight grades, the scores were up. In two grades -- the third and the eighth -- there was a small decrease of .3 and .2 years respectively, and in the ninth grade there was a sizeable decrease of one whole year. These figures are shown in Table 8.1.

TABLE 8.1

DISTRICT G
Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change (-)
Two	3.0	3.2	0.2
Three	4.2	3.9	(-0.2)
Four	5.0	5.5	0.5
Five	6.6	6.8	0.2
Six	7.1	7.6	0.5
Seven	8.0	8.5	0.5
Eight	10.0	9.8	(-0.2)
Nine	11.4	10.5	(-0.9)

Compared to the city as a whole, this district does not show as great an improvement. In five of the eight grades, city-wide averages show a larger improvement than here, while in three grades, this district did better than the city as a whole. (See Table 8.2).

TABLE 8.2

Changes in Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	District G	Citywide	Difference between District G & All Schools (-)
Two	0.2	-0-	0.2
Three	(-0.2)	0.1	(-0.3)
Four	0.5	0.6	(-0.1)
Five	0.2	0.7	(-0.5)
Six	0.5	0.6	(-0.1)
Seven	0.5	1.0	(-0.5)
Eight	(-0.2)	1.1	(-1.3)
Nine	(-0.9)	1.1	(-2.0)

But as already mentioned, it is very difficult to judge the changes in this district, since it has undergone such a sharp change in its pupil population -- particularly in the socio-economic level of the families from which students come. For example, in 1971, the district's black student enrollment was only 14.3%, most of them bused in from outside, with another 3.6% Hispanic. By 1978, blacks had increased to 29.1% and Hispanics to 10.7%. If the district were to just hold its own in terms of reading levels, that might be a significant achievement under decentralization, given these population shifts. It seems to have done that.

One significant trend over the past couple of years has been the marked increase in the district's efforts to secure outside funding. Such funding has increased from $941,888 in 1975, the third lowest in the city, along with two white middle class Queens districts, to $1,523,971 in 1977, and it is up now to $3,398,684. While some of that increase is due simply to a changing population, some has resulted from new, competitive grants that reflect on the aggressive, entrepreneurial efforts of its district office staff and superintendent. One example of this is its big ESAA grants for desegregation programs that we described earlier. District G used such funds to provide educational services for 2,000 black students bused into predominantly white receiving schools and for indigenous students in those schools. And it brought in additional funds to provide enrichment programs for middle class students in those schools. Despite big changes in the ethnic composition of students in the schools involved, there were marked improvements in reading scores. The following table summarizes those improvements:

TABLE 8.3

Ethnic Changes and Reading Scores in Receiving Elementary Schools

	Ethnic Composition Percent White		Reading Scores Percent at or Above Grade Level	
	1972	1979	1972	1979
A	99	81.4	69	75
B	95	76.3	77	83
C	92	76.3	57	64
D	86	71.6	58	73

In every one of these schools, much of the improvement in reading scores came in the last couple of years, after the desegregation program was put into effect.

Data on other indicators show some decline, though again the district has generally held its own, relative to its increased enrollment of poor minority students. Thus, in 1972, its average daily attendance was 90.1%, and that went down to 88.2% in 1979. It is still above the city-wide figure of 84.2%, however, and the decline has leveled off since 1978.

Vandalism rates, by contrast, do show increases, reflecting the changing ethnic composition and neighborhoods in some parts of the district. The annual number of reported broken glass panes has gone up from 5,800 in 1971 to just over 9,000 in 1978; and unlawful entries from 68 to 85 during that period. Fires, on the other hand, decreased from 2 to none.

These ethnic changes have not yet been accompanied by significant changes in staffing within the district, though there are some small ones. There were no minority principals in 1971 and there remained none in 1978. Two of the district's 45 assistant principals or 4.5%, are black, compared with none in 1971. And there has been a small increase in minority teachers during this period. There were only 3 black teachers in 1971 or less than 1%, and that number increased to 33 or 3% in 1978. As for Hispanics, the number of teachers increased from 1 to 7, or from .01% to .6%. The full time professional staff in the district increased from 3 blacks or 0.2% in 1971 to 96 (5.6%) in 1978, while Hispanics increased from 1 (.01%) to 18 (1%). This district will thus be under increasing pressure from federal authorities (e.g., U.S. Office of Civil Rights) to have more ethnic balance among its professional staff in the future since its staffing patterns still reflect older traditions (Board of Education appointment procedures) and demegraphic conditions. The district has changed in its ethnic composition only since the mid-1970s, however, and it will take a while to reflect that more in its staffing.

In brief, this is a district that experienced a big influx of poor blacks and other minorities in the early 1970s, and that has, by and large, accommodated quite well in terms of its performance. Under decentralization it has been able to adapt to these changes in a way that has helped stabilize neighborhoods and maintain levels of student and school performance that existed before. Again, we do not believe that this capacity for responsiveness would have been nearly as strong under centralization. Our discussion in the chapter of the many curriculum and desegregation initiatives the district has taken, particularly in recent years, suggests that they have been facilitated by a decentralized system that allowed for that kind of local level response to environmental change.

CHAPTER 9: District 9

White Middle Class: The only district covering an entire borough. Largest in New York City and second largest in the state. Predominantly white, homeowning, middle class population, mainly Catholic and Italian, with many civil servants and unionists. Many new, white ethnic residents, just migrated from transitional neighborhoods in other boroughs, restive about the influx of poor blacks who have followed them. A potentially explosive racial situation.

Highly politicized CSB, with a superintendent who epitomizes the values and population in the district. It had been informally decentralized before decentralization, because of its geographic isolation. Most serious problems, in addition to integration and race, include: how to effectively manage a district of that size and geographic spread; transportation; and a recent enrollment decline.

Very close-knit community, with a single daily newspaper publicizing educational issues, and with constant parent and civic group pressures on the CSB and superintendent.

Our next district is the only one in New York City that covers an entire borough. It has the largest public school enrollment of any district in the city, now numbering about 35,000, spread out over 48 schools, and it covers a huge geographic area, making it very difficult to manage from a single district office. Indeed, its vast expanse is not balanced by any adequate transportation. While there is a major, east to west expressway, a rapid transit from the ferry area of the northeast to the southwest corner, and other bus service, transportation is a serious problem in the district. Given the tremendous dispersion of schools and the absence of any efficient network of roads and bus routes, students often have to travel great distances to get to school.

Before a bridge was opened in 1965, linking this district to another borough, it was very much isolated from the rest of New York City, taking on, with very few exceptions, a rural or at most a suburban existence. Only areas immediately adjacent to the ferry and in the center of the district could be characterized as urban. Since 1965, the district has increasingly lost its isolation, as it has experienced a vast influx of middle class whites, fleeing from ethnically changing neighborhoods of other boroughs and of poor blacks who followed them. The juxtaposition of the two has created potential racial problems, as we will discuss below.

The district's population changes since 1960 reflect the bridge's impact, with an increase from roughly 221,000 in 1960 to over 295,000 in 1970. BY 1981, it had reached 378,000. Most of the new white population has settled in the southern part of the district, in new middle income communities that have sprung up rapidly in recent years. The new blacks have settled more in the north, particularly in one concentrated area, and not that far away from many of the new whites.* The black population has increased also having gone up from a negligible 5-6% of the total population in 1960 to closer to 12% at present. Moreover, the black population of 1960 was largely an indigenous, middle class group who had lived there for several generations and maintained quite harmonious relations with whites. By contrast, the newer blacks are more of a poverty group whose presence and social problems have created much concern on the part of whites, particularly the new middle class.

The white residents of the district are predominantly Catholic, with estimates of up to 75% of the total population as in this group. The vast majority of them are of Italian background, and they constitute by far the main ethnic group in the district. Both the superintendent and his deputy are from that group, as are many of the district office staff, principals, teachers, and CSB members. A vast network of parochial schools serves this Catholic population, with over 1/3 (roughly 20,000) of all student enrollment in these schools.

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* These new black residents were relocated from another borough into low income projects in one part of district in the face of sharp protests from many local residents. Many racial incidents and much crime are concentrated in that area.

There is also a Jewish population in the district, which, though relatively small (around 5% or 15,000), is quite influential and is also increasing. Many Orthodox (Hasidic) Jews have migrated from Brooklyn, having taken over their traditions and institutions intact. Others, of Conservative or Reform persuasion, live in the north and center and have contributed to the cultural life of those areas. "We have a Jewish community center that has added a lot to the cultural life of the borough," explained an informant. Jews are also spread throughout the new communities in the south, along with other middle class ethnic groups.

Remaining groups constitute a very small segment of the population. There are some new Hispanics (no more that 1-2%), Greeks, Koreans, and Vietnamese, and a Protestant group. There are many small, Protestant churches, particularly Lutheran, but white Protestants as a body are estimated at no more than 10% of the total population, perhaps less.

In brief, this is a district that had at one time a predominantly white working and middle class population and is now multi-ethnic and becoming more so all the time. The change was due largely to the district's decreasing physical isolation from the rest of the city, after the opening of the bridge in 1965, and to the fact that there was so much vacant land there. Indeed, this was the last remaining undeveloped area of New York, and many people from the city's other boroughs moved there in the late 1960s and 70s in search of more space, safer neighborhoods, and better schools.

Many old-time residents express much notalgia for the pre-Bridge days, and they resent the new developments and unrest that have accompanied the arrival of the newcomers. Some particularly resent the increasing demands these newcomers make on public officials for improved services.

These old-timers make sharp distinctions between natives and outsiders, almost as a way of preserving something of value from the past. As one informant who had migrated there some 30 years ago explained: "It gets to a point where I know of a man who was born in Brooklyn and whose parents moved here a week later, and even he is not considered a native. That is how fine they draw the line. I even remember talking with a nearby shopkeeper many years ago and his telling me that he could immediately tell I was not an native. Apparently, I have some midwestern speech patterns that he picked up on. Many of these people now feel the area was basically ruined by the bridge."

A number of geographic divisions exist in the district, separating various racial, ethnic, and economic groups from one another. The main one is between the north and south, with an expressway separating the two. The area just north of the expressway is, as already indicated, the most urban part of the district. An estimated 85-90% of the district's blacks live there, most of them in low income projects and deteriorating slums that differ from those in other boroughs only by their smaller size. The concentration of so many poor blacks in this one area has created serious service delivery as well as social problems (e.g., integration, racial conflict, crime). Urban renewal programs had been planned for the slum areas since the mid-1960s, but they have yet to take place, despite the marked deterioration of housing and commercial establishments. Strong political pressures for maintaining the status quo, regardless of such deterioration, seem to have prevailed. Some low income housing projects have been built in the area, further ghettoizing it and containing a large black population who have been relocated from poverty areas of one of the city's other boroughs. The increase in drug use and crime in and around the projects has been quite marked in recent years, further alarming other residents.

Immediately adjacent to these slum areas, also in the north, are some upper middle class and even more affluent residential communities. These communities exist on a series of hills in the northeast and north central part of the borough, overlooking two other boroughs, and providing spectacular views of the shore line and harbor. The hill areas contain some of the most elegant old stone houses and luxurious estates in the district, reflecting both old and new money, with some of the homes of 19th century and even pre-Civil War vintage. Much of the tradition of the borough is reflected in these old homes. And the contrast between the estates and homes on top of the hills and the slums down below is very dramatic, indeed.

Most of the district's wealth, as well as its cultural, governmental, educational and commercial institutions are concentrated in the center and north. The governmental offices, museums, several colleges, libraries, and other cultural centers are all there. In addition, the area contains some middle income apartment buildings, including a union (UFT) financed mixed, low and middle income complex, such as one would find in more "liberal" sections of other boroughs. The northern and central parts of the district are, in that sense, the more cosmopolitan, liberal, urbanized parts, quite incongruous with the rest of the district, but there nevertheless.

The south, by contrast, is another world. Historically, it consisted of a series of small, self-contained communities -- particularly southwest -- all of them turned much more toward southern New Jersey and the past than toward New York City. As one informant explained: "These are communities right out of the 1920s and 30s. They have their own town centers, but there has been very little modernization of store fronts. Most do not have the large shopping developments and malls that are so common in many suburban communities. They have held on to the past, and their stores are almost exclusively service shops -- dry cleaning, jewelry stores, small groceries, etc."

The southeastern part of the borough, however, is another story altogether. It is the area where many of the new middle class whites, moving in from other boroughs, have settled. One of the area's most striking characteristics is the enormous amount of housing construction, much of it in soggy areas and marsh lands, in a suburban sprawl mode. The new residents have a strongly protectionist, territorial sense, with many "hocked up to their ears in mortgages", and "digging in to preserve 'peaceful' (a code word for all-white) neighborhoods." In some of these families, each parent may hold 2-3 jobs at once. For some who are even more upwardly mobile than their neighbors and who feel particularly threatened by increasing numbers of poor blacks living nearby and/or attending the public schools, this is just a way station for a later move to New Jersey where they hope they can "really get away from it all."

As one of our informants explained: "This is our new middle class. These are New Yorkers who feel they have been driven out of Brooklyn and areas like the Bronx by minorities. They include many police, firemen, sanitationmen, etc. They are sunk in there with huge mortgages, and they are much more activist than any of the natives. The old residents like to keep telling you that they are the forgotten place, as far as New York City public officials are concerned. But they enjoyed being neglected and wouldn't have thought for one minute that they should protest anything, they were so deferent to authority. This new group aren't like that at all. They speak up and protest all the time." The newcomers are, in that sense, the district's outspoken conservative population, fearful of experiencing for a second time, and with an even heavier economic risk, the neighborhood deterioration that they had come to the district to escape. "You have to recognize," explained a minority group spokesman, "that from their point of view, all the things they had left behind were following them into their new community. Now you can be damn sure they don't want their kids going to school with any black kids."

In brief, the district has two main areas: a more urban, established one in the north and center, where most of the blacks and white liberals as well as the borough's main institutions are concentrated; and a newer, more suburban one in the south, with new white ethnic migrants, fleeing from neighborhood deterioration in other boroughs. These areas co-exist in a kind of uneasy truce, and there have been proposals to rezone the borough into two community school districts, corresponding to the north-south division, as we will discuss below. The proposals have never gone past the preliminary talking stage, for a variety of reasons, which we will also discuss.

The Schools Before Decentralization - Long before decentralization came to New York City schools through legislation, this district's schools were informally quite decentralized. This was largely a result of the district's physical isolation from the rest of the city. A watershed year for the disttict in the period preceding this legislative change was 1960 when the central Board of Education appointed its first "outsider" superintendent. An experienced junior high and high school educator within the New York City system, he did not gain immediate acceptance within the district, largely because he was from outside. As he himself recalled: "The people here wanted my predecessor, who was acting superintendent. The local paper had headlines that read: 'Brooklynite to Head Public Schools.' I was considered an outsider, an outlander. But my acceptance was faster than I thought it would be. I got together with my community coordinator that fall and he and I worked with parents and members of community organizations to stage a protest at the Board of Estimate hearings on how the district was gypped in the budget. After we staged our big protest, lo and behold, we got the cutbacks restored. The next editorial in the paper read: 'Well Qualified Newcomer Leads Our District'. This was just three months after I took office."

District residents and educators differ markedly in their assessments of his administration. Some activist parent and civic leaders remember him as a traditional educator and administrator who did an adequate job but was neither "innovative" in the sense of developing that many effective new programs nor responsive to parent input. As one liberal parent activist reported: "He did better than his predecessors, but there was little sense of academic excitement or excellence under his administration. Few kids went on to college. And he didn't move the district's schools from their comfortable, non-achieving existence. Also, he was aloof from parents and it was always 'I know best and you do what I tell you.' He was from the old school in that sense."

By contrast, several district educators, a number of whom he appointed, as well as other, more conservative residents, had a much more positive view. As one such educator noted: "He was a classic product, a very unusual man. Brilliant, knowledgeable and saw horizons far greater than anyone these days dares to see. He made significant changes in the district. He brought in the Bureau of Child Guidance, psychiatric consultation, and special education. He upgraded the aspirations of the community, making them think about college for their children. He cooperated with all segments of the population and was very creative about using various community resources. He had high expectations of his staff and worked along with them. And he was aware the district was sitting on the edge of the greatest metropolis in the world and therefore its children needed to learn how to deal with the impersonal world of the big city. He saw district as training children for the kinds of jobs they are likely to find in New York."

It is likely that both assessments have some validity. From the perspective of liberal activists, a distinct minority in this district, this superintendent was much like many other traditional, Board of Education administrators. Certainly, he didn't measure up to what these activists had hoped for by way of educational leadership. On the other hand, he did appoint several educators to key positions as curriculum directors and principals and did initiate several new programs.

One of the main things the superintendent brought to the district, then, in addition to upgrading its curriculum and staff, was to establish a community school district system long before decentralization was legislated. The two obviously complemented one another, as his use of community agencies probably contributed a lot to educational improvement. For the superintendent, these activities were simply an extension of things he had been doing before he arrived. He was able to do them on a bigger scale and with more flexibility in this district. "I had been dealing with community agencies and problems long before decentralization came into effect. He recalled. "I had to set up a mental health clinic in Bedford Stuyvesant in Brooklyn that eventually spread out into 15 separate neighborhoods. So I had had much experience working with the community before and this was just more of that out here." His development of programs with various cultural institutions, and his close relationship with the district's very strong Parent Teacher Federation are all reflections of this community orientation. As one of his colleagues explained: "We really had decentralization under him long before it ever became official.

Decentralization did not have much effect on curiculum because we were already decentralized."

The decentralization that this superintendent had established was not the kind, however, that many decentralization advocates wanted, as that issue emerged in other parts of the city. His style of decentralization maintained professional dominance. While it did upgrade the staff and curriculum, linked the schools to other agencies, and perhaps brought a more cosmopolitan climate to this previously parochial and insulated district than it had before, those positive developments never involved a sharing of authority between himself and outside lay groups. He was a "new style" educator in the 1960s in his approach to involving community agencies, but he was very much a traditionalist and "old style" superintendent in his unwillingness later on to allow an elected lay board or parent groups to encroach on what he regarded as his educational prerogatives in decisions on staffing and programs. As a result, he was to come into increasing conflict with his CSB under decentralization and not experience quite the same community support his last few years as superintendent that he had before. Before getting to that, it is important to understand how the district reacted to decentralization.

The District's Initial Response to Decentralization - Much like residents of other middle and lower middle class white ethnic areas, those in the district were quite wary of decentralization when the controversy over it raged in New York City in the late 1960s. Several aspects of the district's traditions, location, and population contributed. One informant summarized the situation quite well: "People here don't like change of any kind. They have tremendous respect for authority and unthinking adherence to it. They have an overwhelming loyalty to existing institutions, regardless of how they are working. They feel it is unseemly to criticize public officials. And they didn't want to get involved in problems of the city." One of New York City's biggest problems that some district residents felt they would be dragged into under decentralization related to issues of race. For them, decentralization was seen as a strategy designed to increase the power of blacks, and white residents of the district clearly didn't want that. In 1969, they had a small, non-vocal, and relatively unorganized black population, and they wanted to keep it that way. It was only after decentralization began and they saw the possibility of improving education for their own communities as well as poor minority ones that white middle class groups in New York, including those in this district, re-defined the strategy as more than just one for blacks alone.

There were other conditions in this district, some unique, some not, that further contributed to its early resistance to decentralization. Like many other white ethnic areas, many of its residents were union members, civil servants, and New York City educators, all of whom regarded decentralization as a distinct threat. Moreover, this district, unlike in any other in New York City, has a federation of PTAs, comprised of parents and teachers, rather than just PAs that include only parents. This PTA was most reluctant to support a strategy that might pit parents and teachers against one another. And the teachers' union, a strong force in the PTA, was vehemently opposed to decentralization. "When decentralization first became an issue," explained a parent informant, "the school professionals told all kinds of inflammatory stories about it, as part of the citywide UFT action. It was always said that *they* will take over, and it was clear who the 'they' were, usually minorities and militant parents who would fire teachers."

Nevertheless, decentralization did come to the district as it did everywhere else in New York City, and one of the first big issues for the newly elected CSB was to select a superintendent. There was a small group of liberal parent activists, most of them from the northern part of the Island, who wanted to replace the incumbent with a new, outside superintendent who would be more amenable to CSB and parent input in district decisions. "We recognized the superintendent's skills as an educator," one of them reports, "but he was a product of the old system. And he made things very difficult for us. For example, when we worked to keep the schools open in the UFT strikes, he protected the unions, and we had to keep going down to the district office to get the keys. He was very opposed to decentralization and was a strong defender of the Board of Examiners that selects teachers, principals, and administrators. We wanted him out."

This group did not have enough power, however, to prevail in that decision, and after much delay, the CSB re-appointed him. Though he stayed on for four more years, his relations with the CSB and with activist parents were sometimes strained. He tried to run the district as he had before, reserving to himself many decisions on curriculum staff, and budget that he regarded as educational ones. The CSB, on its side, regarded those decisions as matters of policy and within its prerogative, and it kept pressing on him the necessity of sharing authority. He kept resisting, and the continued encounters wore both parties down. As one of his supporters recalled: "He literally got sicker and sicker on the job. He finally resigned in 1973 because of ill health and because his pension made it too costly to continue. But it was clear that he could no longer lead the district as he had before decentralization." The CSB members had been hard on him, based on their sharp disagreement with his style. As one of them reported: "He was both lord and master of the school system at elementary and junior high levels as well as the high schools. His relationship with the CSB was mutually very difficult for all involved. One of the issues was that he did not feel he was beholden to the CSB for his job. He felt that it had taken him 25-30 years to get to his position and that no school board was going to dictate to him how education ought to be provided in the district."

The experience of this superintendent and his CSB thus recapitulates a similar one of other old-line superintendents and their boards throughout the city, except that he stayed on much longer than they did. It was an increasingly difficult period of service, however, and the superintendent's resignation was a welcome relief for all parties.

In 1973, the CSB undertook an extensive search for his succesor, and contrary to what one would expect, it selected an outsider, who had been superintendent in a small New Jersey community. What was more surprising was the fact that all three of the final candidates were from outside, indicating how much this CSB was determined to depart from tradition.

As one might imagine, the controversies accompanying this selection of an outsider were very intense. The strongest opposition came from the UFT whose local leadership waged a "no holds barred", all-out battle against the appointment. Much in the tradition of their strategy in the 1960s, UFT offficials claimed that the CSB's choice was anti-Semitic, based on some of his administrative actions in the New Jersey district. The particular actions involved non-payment of salary to Jewish teachers on Jewish holidays. Non-Jewish teachers in this New Jersey community had complained that Jewish teachers were being paid both for non-Jewish holidays and Jewish ones, thus creating an inequity between the two groups. Since his New Jersey school board refused to take on the issue, this superintendent passed an administrative decision whereby Jewish teachers could take Jewish holidays off against leave days. As a Jewish leader who investigated the union's charge recalled: "The UFT began an irresponsible, smear campaign. It was a character assassination with little regard to educational issues. It was clarified at one public meeting that the anti-Semitism charge had no basis whatsoever."

The new outsider superintendent served for two years, from 1974-1976, and, in retrospect, it is amazing that he lasted that long. The CSB president was the main person responsible for his appointment, having secured the necessary votes against strong opposition from 3 UFT oriented board members. But the superintendent's problem went deeper than that. Having started with no constituency, he made little effort to built one. Teachers, principals, and other educators undermined him at seemingly every opportunity, and it soon became apparent that he was unable to provide much leadership. As one CSB member who had originally supported him explained: "I voted for him, and I now think of it as an honest mistake, because he was simply not ready to deal with a district the size of ours, with all its problems and complexities. He was supposed to be a change from the bureaucratic superintendent we had; but because of the financial situation, the unions, and the central board, he could not function and do what he wanted to do."

An even more revealing comment came from another strong supporter who tried to help this outsider superintendent and later gave up in dismay. As he recalled: "He was a lovely, nice guy who was cruelly abused in the selection process. He never built a constituency. I kept telling him he had to do that, and he kept saying to me that the teachers and principals were honorable people who were professionals and wanted to serve the community. He was incredibly naive. You must realize you are in a political situation, I told him, or you won't be around after your two-year contract, and that's what happened."

By 1976, then, the CSB was ready to select still another superintendent, which it did, and he has been there ever since. Its selection was an educator who had lived and served in the district, had been a deputy superintendent there and had many of the political and interpersonal skills that his predecessor did not have. He represents still another of those district superintendents under decentralization who reflect so much the backgrounds, values, and styles of the community. Though not a native, he had lived and served in the district a long time and was therefore very knowledgeable about its traditions and politics. Having served as a teacher and then district office administrator for so many years, he had a similarly extensive knowledge of the workings of the schools. As a former community and public relations staff person in the district, he was very skilled at dealing with its many educational interest groups. And he was a Catholic of Italian origins, which further legitimated his as one of the district's "own".

Despite this superintendent's many characteristics that made him such a good choice, the vote was only a 5-4 one between him and another district educator. One of the main differences between the two was the other candidate's more outspoken style. A majority on the CSB decided that such a style might not be as conducive to establishing the political stability that it wanted, after its stormy years with the two previous superintendents.

This defeated candidate had other skills, however, particularly in administration and business affairs that made it important for the superintendent to find a place for him in his administration. He therefore chose this person as his deputy for administration, and the two have functioned as a strong team. While one might expect some competition between them, they seem to have worked well together.

Educational Interest Groups - This district has a very organized set of constituencies, the most influential of which include unions, political clubs, parents, the Catholic Church, and local colleges. The UFT has been particularly vocal and strong, as indicated in the above discussion of the selection of the outsider superintendent, and it has continued to be powerful, despite that and other setbacks. Another publicized setback was the attempt by the union rep, in 1976, to secure a principalship. The wide-spread consensus among a majority on the CSB and among parent and civic groups was that this would just have been a political payoff appointment and that prevented it from going through. The UFT lost further credibility in that incident, though it still remains a force, with several CSB members consistently representing its interests.

The most powerful parent body is the district's Federation of PTAs. It is an umbrella organization that represents the public schools in the district. It has many committees, on such matters as food programs, school safety, reimbursable programs, transportation, adult education, and drugs. It holds monthly meetings with the UFT and CSA, as well as with the superintendent and borough president, and it advises the CSB on critical issues. In that sense, the Federation is an important participant in district affairs.

Unlike in any other district, the Federation acts in concert with teachers, and that imposes obvious constraints on what kinds of issues are raised and how hard particular grievances are pushed. The Federation fits, however, with the district's culture and mentality, and independent parent associations have never been able to get established there. The United Parents' Association has tried to organize in the district, but it has never been successful. There are a few schools that have independent PAs, but they have had little power in the district. One of the things that hurt the UPA a lot in its organizing effort was its being identified as an advocate of decentralization. As one informant explained: "The UPA was seen as espousers of decentralization, and in that sense as anti-teacher. And the district's parents saw cooperation with the UPA as steps away from collaboration with teachers. And since all this UPA organizing was coming to a head when the controversy over decentralization was at its peak, the UPA could not make it. It all fell apart on the issue of whether or not there should be a parent group separate from teachers. All this took place in the late 1960s and early 70s."

The UPA and independent parent associations, then, tended to be defined by many district residents as a New York City oriented, liberal, anti-establishment group. In some instances, they were even seen as radicals, as were the advocates of decentralization. The Federation, by contrast, was a conservative, local body that didn't want to evaluate or criticize teachers. It reflected the district's respect for authority, in this instance, professional authority, that some of the newcomers were beginning to question. But those newcomers were not that much of a voice when the UPA tried to organize, and they have not pressed since than to set up independent parent associations. One unsuccessful UPA organizer summarized the situation well: "The UPA was started in 1968, because the Federation which has been in existence for the last couple of decades was not adequately serving the needs of parents. The Federation is hampered by its association with the union. They often act as one, rather than representing the parents as an independent voice. The parents here are rather provincial, because of the isolation of the district. As such, their behavior is not sophisticated. They don't know how to deal with the system. By being locked in with the teachers, they don't develop their own strategies for dealing with problems from their own perspective. They very sincere people, and people here are not apathetic, but they are naive. The UPA is city-oriented. We need sophisticated new blood. Sincerity is not enough. There is a need for parents to be channeled into wider horizons."

In brief, there is a large Federation of PTAs, but it is organized in such a way that it does little to represent parent interests when they encroach on those of teachers. The UPA and independent PAs would, of course, do that, but many parents are not yet ready for that. As another parent put it: "The Federation here is extremely conservative. They don't want to make waves. They are afraid of saying anything, because they don't like being yelled at. The Federation could be quite a block if they organized it right."

The only parent group with such broad horizons is an organization called PACE (Parent Action Coalition for Education). They meet periodically to discuss broad policy issues as they relate to the district's schools, but they have a very small membership and their influence is hardly felt at all.

Despite the differences in outlook between the more conservative Federation and the more progressive UPA and PACE group, the district has several committees composed of representatives of all three groups. That permits a much broader parent voice than would otherwise be the case.

Then there are the political clubs, both Republican and Democratic, and representing particular areas of the district. They endorse slates of CSB candidates and they push for particular staff appointments -- for principals, APs, and district office positions. Much of this activity in regard to jobs goes on sub rosa in all districts, but here it is even more covert than elsewhere. There is endless talk and rumor about how particular CSB members are subject to political pressures regarding appointments of people for principalships. But district residents are extremely reluctant to discuss these matters, particularly to outsiders.

The Catholic Church is another powerful institution in the district. Even though there is only 1 CSB member explicitly identified as a Catholic slate person, the church's presence alone exerts a profound impact on the district. The parochial schools are a major competitor with the public ones. Beyond that, parochial schools use many of the same buses as the public schools.

Statistical Profile - The student enrollment in this district's public schools is the highest in the city. It went up from just under 36,000 in 1970 to roughly 39,500 in 1975, reflecting the massive influx of middle class whites and then blacks from other boroughs. It is now down to 35,000 and declining. White enrollment declined from 86.4% in 1970 to 80.1% in 1979, while Hispanics increased from 3.9% to 6% and blacks went from 9.2% to 11.7%. The socioeconomic status of students, meanwhile, has declined slightly, reflecting these ethnic changes. The teaching staff is very experienced, with roughly 88% of them having had five or more years of teaching experience. Only the more affluent middle class districts in Queens and Brooklyn have more senior teachers, reflecting the general city-wide pattern of white middle class districts having the most experienced teachers and poor minority districts having those with least experience.

As for the amount of reimbursable funds coming in, the district has received a tremendous increase from only $1.5 million in 1975-76 to $4.5 million in 1977-78. Initiatives taken by some district office curriculum staff, plus an increase in the numbers of poor minority students account for this change.

CSBs and CSB-Superintendent Relations - Right from the onset of decentralization, CSBs in this district have been most assertive about their powers, with the first CSB in particular getting caught up in issues of school administration as well as policy. Its continued conflicts with the superintendent reflected this, as it challenged him on what he regarded as professional matters. One of the reasons for this relates to the very nature of this district as a political community. A single newspaper keeps highlighting school issues, making the actions of public officials quite visible. They are thereby very vulnerable to interest group pressures, particularly in such a traditional and closely knit area.

Another characteristic of the district's boards has been their strong chairpeople. In 1974, for example, the chairman worked effectively to push through the selection of an outsider superintendent, against the strong objection of the UFT and some UFT-oriented CSB members. After that chairman resigned over a union issue in which UFT-oriented CSB members vehemently opposed his stand that there be more classroom and less preparation time, his successor was equally as strong, having served as the chairperson of the city-wide Community School Boards Association.

As for constituencies represented on the board, perhaps the most powerful has been the UFT that at any given time might have as many as 4 or 5 board members who would strongly represent its positions on key issues. The Catholic Church usually had one or two members representing its interest. There were usually a couple of parent representatives, and there was often a representative elected by the small but quite powerful Jewish community.

CSBs in this district have not been held in high regard by many groups. Indeed, perceptions of the CSB and its operations, from among active parent and civic leaders and even from many CSB members themselves are quite negative. Those on which the most consensus exists are (1) that it is a group without any coherent sense of purpose or vision, functioning instead as 9 separate members who don't know how to work together; (2) that it is too deeply involved in administration, rather than in setting policy; (3) that its members are an upwardly mobile group most of whom are there mainly for personal gain, as a way of furthering their political careers; and that as a result, (4) they cannot function effectively.

Comments from various informants indicate the nature of these perceptions. One university administrator noted: "They are just a bunch of busy bodies. Many see it as a stepping stone to personal gain. They have more committees than you can shake a stick at, and it slows things down. It seems they have a committee for everything." Another district educator noted: "Decentralization doesn't work here because we have nine nickel and dime politicians. For them, it is a stepping stone to a political job. They like all the publicity and are loud and active in public. But they do little on education." A leading district office educator explained: "Prior to decentralization, when the people that served on the school board were appointed, it was much better, because then it was people who had no axe to grind. It was people who were secure in their positions like the head of Con Ed or heads of various banks. Now the board is made of people who have personal interests -- political ambitions of getting better jobs through the election route. They are not educators, nor are they interested in education. They don't understand people with creative ideas. They are a group without vision. Finally, a CSE member related: "The school boards here have always tended to be political. Moreover, I found that with the passage of the Sunshine Law requiring all board meetings to be open to the public, instead of improving the board's performance, it retarded it in a number ways. Now, when we have public meetings, I find that board members who used to negotiate and resolve issues do more grandstanding and posturing in public to play off the audience."

Key Issues - Several key issues keep emerging in this district, most of them having little to do with decentralization, though having a decentralized system should give the district more flexibility in dealing with them. One set relates to the district's size and geographic spread. As the largest district in the city, it has been extremely difficult to manage from a single district office. The sheer logistical problems of district office staff getting out to all the schools add to the problems. The borough never grew in a planned fashion, with any kind of orderly and rationally-laid out network of roads and transportation routes. In fact, when a state senator tried to minimize the disorganized and sprawl-like growth of new suburban areas in the south by sponsoring legislation that would secure funding for better planned communities, he was not only defeated by local citizen groups who rejected that approach, but he lost much political support.

The other obstacle to developing a better transportation network has been the topography (physical layout) of the borough. Large, irregularly contoured hills run through the center, and many areas, particularly in the south and west are very low lying and contain extensive marsh land. Building an efficient network of roads through these areas would be difficult and expensive. The result has been that transportation of students has been a very complex operation, with long, irregular bus routes.

On the matter of the district's size and its manageability, there has been much discussion over the years about breaking it up into two districts. Some CSB members and civic leaders developed such proposals, but they never passed. They involved dividing the district into separate north and south districts, with the expressway as the dividing line. Arguments for redistricting were that it would make the new, smaller districts less bureaucratic and more open to parent and community participation; that it would thereby lessen the insulation of the local boards and district office professionals, increasing their accountability to the public; that it would permit the district office to provide more technical assistance and monitoring of individual schools; that it would help bring in more money; and that it would thereby improve education.

Compelling arguments were made against redistricting as well, however, and the opposition always prevailed. The opposition argued that as two districts, the borough would be divided along racial and ethnic lines, thereby making integration even more difficult than it already was and increasing racial animosities; that transportation, which was already difficult could become even more so; and that the borough might get less funding than before.

There were, of course, some informal political agendas on both sides that did not get mentioned in these public discussions. Those supporting the status quo often had a lot of political power that they saw as threatened by redistricting; while those who were for the change saw it as a way of increasing their power. In general, the groups who supported the change were minority parents and leaders from the north who felt disenfranchised, some liberals and independents, also from the north, who felt that it would be given better treatment with its own separate district, and a small number of district office staff and CSB members who saw administrative benefits from such a change.

In 1975, redistricting was such a big issue that the CSB set up a special task force to look into the problem. The final CSB vote was 7-2 against it, with the CSB president voting for it, along with one other colleague. The small coalition of minorities and some northern area liberals had not been strong enough to carry the day. And those groups against it included the parent federation, the UFT and CSA, most of the district office prefessionals, and, of course, 7 of the 9 CSB members.

The problems that redistricting was designed to address, however, did not disappear, and since 1976 when he was appointed, the superintendent and his staff have continued to find it difficult to administer the district as a single entity. Finally, in the summer of 1979, the superintendent proposed a new plan, maintaining a single district office but dividing the district into three geographic areas, each to be supervised by one administrator who would, in turn, report to the superintendent. We will discuss the details of that plan below.

Another serious problem in the district is integration. Many outside observers as well as enlightened local residents are concerned about the future of race relations in the borough, for all the reasons indicated earlier. Many whites in the district are the new middle class we have described, who came there in part to get away from deteriorating neighborhoods and poor blacks. And they then found that poor blacks had also moved out there, many of them relocated from other areas, but there nonetheless. The borough has experienced many conflicts in recents years between the two groups, and the schools were one arena where those conflicts got expressed, as is usually the case.

There are at least two points of view within the district as to how well it has handled integration and race problems. One, espoused by the superintendent, many of his professional staff, CSB members, and some parents is that the district has done a good job on these matters, in the face of a difficult situation. The superintendent, for example, maintains that he has made many zoning decisions before schools located near new, low income housing projects become solidified as all-black schools. As he noted, in defending his administrative actions: "I designed the zoning here to limit segregation. There were many steps taken to integrate blacks and whites. We have some intermediate schools that are examples of the best in integration. One of them has 60% blacks and its programs are so good that many whites have wanted to get into the schools. Had one big series of projects been maintained as integrated housing the way we wanted, this would not have been the problem it is."

On the other hand, many district residents and some central board staff have a different view. They note that two elementary schools that have 70% black students, though the total district enrollment of blacks is under 12%. They also report that some black students are zoned into segregated black schools, even when there are predominantly white or integrated schools nearer where they live. As one central board staff person noted: "This district is not addressing the race issue like it should. There are other districts that do the same thing, but the way they are managing it now, they will have a falling dominos situation, where schools will become all black. They don't understand where they are historically, and they don't engage in long range planning. Some of it is not their fault, with the building of those low income projects all in one area, but they are going to be in deep trouble if they don't address the integration problem better than they have."

The actual situation is somewhere in between these two conflicting perceptions, though probably closer to the latter. From the perspective of central board staff who have a broad, comparative view of how all the districts are doing on the integration issue, this one has not distinguished itself in that regard. While the same could be said for other districts, this one is also seen as not dealing as productively as would be desirable with integration problems.

Desegregation would have been a problem in this district, regardless of whether or not the schools were decentralized, but it has not been handled as productively as it might be under that arrangement. It may well be that no particular system of governance will handle it that well, but under decentralization, it has not yet been possible in this district for a coalition to emerge that might deal with desegregation in a more anticipative fashion. As one leading white educator predicted: "The major future crisis of the district will be integration. There is a new special task force on integration which has met 3 times. It consists of all educational interest groups in the district. I hope it doesn't get ugly, but I fear that it will. I suspect that, like other districts, we will settle on a band-aid, token solution. The response of the non-vocal resident will be to send his children to parochial school."

In recent years, and related to the race issue, declining enrollments have been a source of great concern to public school administrators and CSB members. Total enrollment is now down to 35,000, the lowest it has been since decentralization, and down from a high of over 40,000 in 1975. Declining birth rates, the area's aging population, and an out-migration of younger families are three important reasons. Many new residents, for example, have older children of high school or college age. Another reason for the decline, however, may be the desire on the part of public school parents to protect their children from what they perceive as racial and other problems of the public schools. This is borne out by data on trends in parochial school enrollments in the district. Since 1975, during the period when public school enrollment is down by more than 5,000 students, that in Catholic schools in the district has remained stable, at roughly 15,000 for elementary and junior high levels. This pattern reflects a national trend, but it is regarded with some sensitivity by public school officials and parent groups in this district. They fear that it may be interpreted as reflecting a declining confidence in public education in the district; and these groups, as expected, vehemently deny that that is so.

At any rate, there is competition between the two systems. Catholic schools at all levels do have waiting lists, and public school supporters are often defensive about their declining enrollment relative to the former. A recent development is for parochial schools to attract high achieving black students, many of whose parents are as anxious to get their children out of the public schools as are the whites.

This move to the parochial schools, however, is not just one of avoidance. Many of these schools have excellent programs, in addition to having fewer racial and other social problems that public schools have. And what is quite noticeable to all district residents is the high academic achievements of parochial high school graduates. Each year the daily newspaper publishes information on the college admissions, scholarshipa, and other prizes of graduating seniors from the district's high schools, and preponderance have gone in recent years to Catholic high school graduates.

One significant advantage Catholic schools have over public ones is their K-8 grade organization that parents see as more beneficial for the safety of their children and for maintaining authority and discipline than the public schools' system, with its geographically distant junior high and intermediate schools. Public school students must often travel away from theri neighborhood to these schools, and that has been a source of concern not only in New York City but in inner cities throughout the nation as well. Indeed, the public schools in this district, as in others, plan to experiment with some K-8 schools to retain and attract back many students who would otherwise leave, and the district many well move more extensively in this direction in the future.

It should also be noted that the relation of the public and parochial schools in this district is not just a competitive one. There is much cooperation on common programs, as well, far beyond anything that exists elsewhere in New York City, as we will discuss in a later section.

Superintendent's Management Style - Having provided this background on the district's demography and politics, we may turn now to an analysis of the management style of the superintendent. A hallmark of his style has been his ability to maintain a stable, efficiently run district. His main skills are those of balancing the demands of the district's many constituencies, of working harmoniously with his CSB, and of delegating effectively to his district office staff and to principals. Indeed, he has given principals much autonomy in the running of their schools. At the same time, he has established a strong district office presence by requiring that minimal standards are met and by working through his staff to maintain a variety of district-wide programs. By and large, however, he is much more of a facilitator than a dynamic leader, and that seems to be the style that this diverse and fairly conservative district desires. As one parent observer noted: "He gives the principals a peaceful environment, and it is up to them to run their schools. It permits more diversity to emerge. He has been successful because he gave the district what it wanted. He is a facilitator, not an innovating leader." Decentralization could thus produce innovative, "new style" superintendents such as those of Districts B and E or, as in this case, it could produce ones who served a district's interest by maintaining a stable political and administrative climate.

(1) CURRICULUM STYLE - Though there is no explicit educational philosophy or strategy that the superintendent has enunciated beyond a strong emphasis on minimum standards, this district has a wide variety of effective educational programs.

In comparing the district's various schools, what stands out most is their great diversity. some schools have open education programs, while many are more traditional. Much like District G, this one allows individual principals to develop their own educational philosophy and programs, as along as minimal standards are met, and as long as the parents support them and they get results. As we will indicate in a concluding chapter, that may well be one of the most important contributions decentralization has made in the New York City system, to free up many schools to develop programs that most suit their needs.

One of the district's strengths has been some of its principals and district office curriculum specialists. Its science and math coordinators, for example, were among the most imaginative in the city. They developed many programs that they made available to the schools, played an active technical assistance role, and were successful in securing state and federal funding. In science, for example, there were programs that combined science and reading, there were science fairs, there were experientially-based, hands-on programs that were all developed by the district's creative science coordinator who was widely recognized as such, both within the district and outside. And he work with the many cultural and recreational agencies of the district in running these programs.

The math coordinator and his programs, to make another example, were of the same high quality. In fact, one of his remedial math programs was so well regarded in Washington that the district receivced Title I and then Title III grants to disseminate it all over the country. And the program now exists in a majority of the New York City community school districts as well. Some district parents complain that this coordinator has spent too much time on the national dissemination of the program and too little in schools within the district, but it is clear that he has provided it with some excellent programs.

Some principals in the district have also done exciting and productive things. One such principal, for example, devised a highly individualized, open education program in 1979, with strong community agency linkages. Parents were initially resistant, but he soon won them over, and in two years, he increased student attendance from 79 to 90%. He was somewhat of a rebel within the district who was allowed to "do his thing" after he secured parent support, and there have been others throughout the district who have been equally as effective.

As for the district office's role, since the superintendent was appointed in 1976, there have been educational program initiatives from that office, even though the district has experienced the same kinds of cutbacks that others have. These initiatives include, in addition to the math and science programs already mentioned, those folr gifted and talented students, various other enrichment programs -- e.g., district-wide instrumental music programs, a diagnostic reading center, a brochure and training for parents on how to work with their children to improve their school work and motivation, and some significant administrative improvements. Two such improvements include the increasing use of the computer to program classes and instruction and a re-organization of the district to facilitate a closer monitoring of schools and more adherence to minimum curriculum standards that the district office developed.

There are at least two prevailing perceptions as to how innovative the superintendent and district office have been on curriculum. One, held by some liberal, activist parents, by curriculum coordinators appointed in previous administrations and whose jobs have been eliminated under the recent re-organization, and by other district educators is that this superintendent has been much more of a "caretaker" than an "innovator." As one former coordinator reported: "There is no district educational philosophy and no curriculum leadership by the superintendent or CSB. Educational philosophy has emerged at the individual school level. Curriculum has been neglected in this district, because administrative and political responsibilities consume the superintendent's time."

By contrast, other district educators point to the district office initiatives listed above as reflecting a much more activist superintendent and district office presence than the critics acknowledge. As one central staff person explained, in defending their record: "The programs here since 1976 have been very good. Many people at the central board have cited us for our programs. They have become models for the rest of the city. And they have been put together under the most adverse circumstances, with the budget crisis. Headquarters has been amazed at what we have done with the limited amount of money at our disposal -- enrichment programs, math and science programs, the gifted programs, instrumental music programs in all our schools, a diagnostic reading center, a computer program. We have done a lot here and have been very innovative."

One of the most significant educational programs in the district, developed outside the district office, though with its involvement, is a consortium of over 100 agencies, serving youth and adults from kindergarten through graduate school and including parochial, private, and public schools as well as colleges. Begun in 1974, it has been funded by several foundations (Carnegie, Ford, and Hazen) as well as by such participating agencies as the New York City Board of Education, the district office, the Board of Higher Education, the Archdiocese, and local colleges. It has many different kinds of programs, both for advanced and low achieving students, e.g., a diagnostic reading center at one college for remediation; college course program for high school and even some junior high and intermediate school students; a learning exchange of many different courses taught by community members in offices, homes, and schools all over the borough; a classroom assistant, teacher training program; math and English skills centers; and curriculum development efforts to better articulate educational programs in the district from kindergarten through college.

The consortium is a non-profit corporation whose board includes top officials from the central Board of Education, the district, the archdiocese, the colleges, and the teachers' union. It is an extraordinarily unique program in terms of its multi-agency participation and broad scope of activities and target students. And it has undertaken many educational improvement and enrichment programs. Moreover, in addition to an energetic, dynamic director, it had the former superintendent as one of its main, full-time consultants, until he died in 1981. And the agency's director has forged a cooperative program that has public and parochial school officials working together. That is quite an attainment, since there is so much competition between them as well. While some district officials, including the superintendent, report that this consortium copied from the public schools and has a curriculum office that is far inferior to the district's, our observations indicate that it is one of the most effective agencies of its kind anywhere.

(2) DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE SCHOOLS - The amount of contact between the district office and the schools has been somewhat limited. The present superintendent has given the schools much more autonomy than did his predecessors. In addition, the district has fewer central office staff as a result of the budget cuts. And it was never that easy to cover so many schools over such a wider area to begin with.

In recognition of these problems, and to provide more district office leadership on curriculum and instruction, the superintendent reorganized the district in the summer of 1979 into a new, tripartite structure. It was to be managed by three supervising principals, each responsible for a different geographic area. The three areas were delineated so that, as much as possible, all the main ethnic groups in the district would be represented in each. And the superivisory principals would be responsible for monitoring curriculum and instruction practices, training and evaluating staff, developing new curriculum materials, helping make the curriculum more uniform throughout the district, and, in general, improving communication between the district office and the schools. Since each supervisory principal is responsible for only 1/3 of the schools in the district, it would now be possible for the district office to provide much more direct supervision than before.

One of the main features of the reorganization is that it has eliminated the district office coordinators, whose functions are now taken over by the new supervising principals, with the coordinators being re-assigned to particular schools as principals. Needless to say, many coordinators were unhappy about that change, which they assert was made without their having been consulted. These coordinators and other interest parties, e.g., civic and parent leaders, expressed much concern that the coordinators' expertise would no longer be available on the district-wide basis that it was before, but only for the schools to which they had been assigned. As one local agency administrator who was not part of the public school system observed: "These curriculum coordinators were spectacular, and now many are gone because of the reorganization. They were among the very best in the business and had develped many outstanding new programs. They did great things with outside grants, and one of the tragedies of the situation was their transfer out to where they couldn't be nearly as useful as before."

The superintendent, however, had a different view, as he justified the change. "All those science programs that existed before exist today, and that coordinator is not here. These things still go on. And in many schools, they never saw those coordinators. The schools saw them only once a year."

There was token opposition to the reorganization from parents and teachers on behalf of the coordinators, at the time of its introduction; and some principals who feared they would be subject to much closer supervision also expressed concern.

It is difficult to assess how the reorganization has affected the district, just based on two years' experience. Interviews with principals, a group originally opposed to the change, elicited a range of responses. Those who were positive commented on the increased contact they had with the district office, through visits from the supervising principal; and they regarded the contacts as supportive. Those who were negative complained about the supervisors' attempts to standardize the curriculum through issuing impersonal directives, rather than visiting each school to see what its individual problems were. The following illustrate these reactions:

> This year, more than ever before, there has been much more careful supervision than in previous years. The three supervising principals are all top men. They have been coming around here actually very often this year. They really do offer us assistance. With this new type of system, there really is more communication between us and the district office.
>
> Old-line principal, strong supporter of DeSario.
>
> The supervising principals don't investigate what is going on in the various schools. They just send directives that are irrevelant to me. My supervising principal did not come to my school to find out what I needed. Each school has different problems that a uniform code cannot handle. It is just a waste of money and time to print all that material that nobody really uses.
>
> Very highly regarded principal, with many years of experience.
>
> I think the new supervisory principals are just another layer of bureaucracy. Instead of supervising principals we need more teachers. And one of them got his job through political maneuvering, because there is no way he could have gotten the job otherwise. He was such a lousy principal that parents never wanted to send children to his school.
>
> Minority principal, also highly regarded.

> In better times, there used to be a coordinator for each subject, so that if you had a problem, you could go directly to that person for help. Now, we have just three supervising principals to oversee everything, and there isn't a special person you can go to for a problem in a subject area.
>
> Old-line principal.

It is likely that this change the district has undergone from a functionally specialized organization, with district office curriculum experts providing assistance to schools, to a geographically decentralized one, with district office generalists supervising schools, has probably had results similar to what takes place in business organizations that undergo such changes. There is a lightening of the administrative, "fire fighting" load on the top executive. There may also be some increasing uniformity in the product -- e.g., the curriculum. There is probably at the same time a sacrifice or diminution of professionalism as the specialists from the old structure are re-assigned and the generalist administrators who take their place have much less expertise in those fields. And there may be a lessening of flexibility for individuals schools as the new generalist administrators (supervisors) attempt to fit them into a particular mold.

There is no question but that the district has serious problems of size that have made it difficult to manage from one central office. The reorganization was an attempt to establish a new structure that would facilitate improved management. It was especially relevant at a time of new budget cuts, since the change was thought to have the potential for decreasing administrative overhead costs.

This significant reorganization must be understood, then, in the context of a series of management problems the district has faced: its declining budgets, its superintendents' perennial problems of managing a district of this size and geographic dispersion; and the particular concerns of the present superintendent with gaining greater control over district administration. As the superintendent explained on the money issue: "With the cutbacks, we could no longer afford 17 separate coordinators, and the three supervising principals filled the void." Also, from his perspective, these coordinators had become separate political entities in their own right and eliminating them gave him more direct control over the schools through his supervisors. In addition, he felt that under the new system there would be more of a district office presence in the schools -- to monitor them, maintain district standards, provide technical assistance, and respond to grievances that couldn't be handled at the school level.

The biggest changes the reorganization effected were in the relation of the district office to principals. The latter are now more closely supervised than they were. And they have a new administrative layer (the supervising principals) between them and the superintendent. They objected initially to the change largely for these reasons, but their objections were obviously over-ruled. And the principals still have access to the superintendent, when necessary.

(3) DISTRICT OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF - This district is, as indicated, a stable and well run one that has faced serious management problems resulting from its size and geographic dispersion and that has attempted to deal more effectively with them through a recent reorganization. The purpose of that reorganization, to give more district office support to school level professionals, may or may not be achieved. The problem with it is that the new supervising principals have little staff assistance to carry out these functions. The coordinators are no longer available on a district-wide basis, and without staff, it will be very difficult for

the supervisors to provide the essential follow-up assistance to facilitate the effective implementation of programs. Furthermore, on most curriculum matters, they don't have the expertise of the coordinators who had been widely recognized as among the leaders in their respective fields. So while this reorganization might take a lot of the administrative load away from the superintendent and remove some school level problems from his and the CSB's concerns (e.g., parent and teacher grievances in individual schools that supervisors would handle before they escalated and got sent up to higher levels), there are fewer professionals in the district office to provide the kinds of curriculum leadership and assistance to schools that would be desirable.

(4) DISTRICT OFFICE AND COMMUNITY - This district is a close-knit community in which public officials are subjected to much pressure from citizens for improved services. In the case of the schools, that pressure is reinforced by the high visibility given to education issues by the daily newspaper and by the importance of education to so many local residents. The new ones, in particular, have become quite vocal in their demands for better schools, or at least for schools that they deem "better." The result has been that the superintendent and CSB take parent complaints very seriously. The CSB and superintendent are sometimes characterized as taking parent complaints so seriously that they may react to them in a way that undermines the professionals. As one civic leader explained: "We have a serious problem of discipline in many of our middle class areas. We have situations where the parents come in and say: 'You can't tell my kind what to do.' But their kids are acting up and should be punished or reprimanded. Instead, there is too much cooling off of parents in these situations, and the superintendent and CSB allow that.

The parents will pick up the support of the PTA, while the teachers wanting to do the reprimanding will pick up the support of the union, and we have an unfortunate confrontation. Sometimes, the teacher will try to curb the disruptive behavior by telling the parents that these kids don't get enough sleep, that they don't have breakfast, or that there is something else about their life that makes for disruption in the classroom. The parents then say that it is none of the schools' business, but to the extent that it leads to disruption in the classroom and affects all the other kids who are not disruptive and who want to learn, it is the schools' business. There is a breakdown of authority in these middle class schools and parents are passing judgement on the values of teachers."

In some respects, decentralization in a close knit, parochial district like this one encourages such an abdication of authority and leadership. That is most likely to occur when CSB members are strongly oriented toward using their position on the board for a future position or career in politics, which many of them are, and when the superintendent is similarly pushed, to "keep the peace", as well as keep his job.

Ironically, though the district has at times been over-responsive to parent grievances and complaints in what may be unproductive ways, the CSB has not functioned in that open a fashion. Despite the state's Sunshine Law, requiring that all board meetings be open to the public, it continues to hold meetings in secret and does not divulge to the public either the times of those meetings or their substance. This is not unique to District H, merely recapitulating what has taken place in several others, but it is particularly interesting in light of the district's over-responsiveness in other respects.

On the more positive side, the PTAs are very active, and even though parents do not exist as a separate body, they do play a strong role in the district on various committees and through the district responding to their complaints. Also, the Federation of PTAs has been effective in having its candidates eelcted to the CSB.

(5) DISTRICT OFFICE BUREAUCRACY - As for the organization of the district office, a few patterns stand out. One is the very significant role played by the deputy superintendent. He takes care of all matters relating to business and administration and does that very well and expeditiously. He has been particularly active in developing a computerized information system to help in generating reports on the fiscal and educational picture of the district. In addition, as a native to the district and as an astute administrator and political analyst in his own right, he provides the superintendent with strong back up assistance in making non-routine strategy decisions as well as in day to day management.

Another feature of the district office is that it has a small staff, relative to many minority districts. One reason is that it did not have, until quite recently, that many large, federally funded programs, because it didn't have, in turn, enough of a poor, minority student population. The coordinators had been successful in securing outside grants, but they were generally for small, delimited programs that did not require a lot of staffing.

Since the superintendent's style is to have decisions made through a consensus, and in committees and task forces, there seems to be much coordination among district office staff and units. Relations are quite informal, and few if any separate, fragmented turfs seem to exist, now that most of the coordinator positions have been eliminated.

Conclusions - District H has not been affected by decentralization nearly as much as most others, largely because it already had decentralization, long before the New York City school system in its entirety did. Most of the school staff were born and/or lived in the district, and the schools and their programs reflected local needs. As one parent informant explained: "What many people don't understand is that it was not a big thing here. It was not dramatic, because we had it before. Also, people here don't understand what all the fuss was about, because for them decentralization was just more of the same, except that we had elected instead of appointed CSBs. They don't understand what it was like in other districts where such decentralization did not exist before 1970." The present superintendent expressed similar views: "There was no big concern hereabout decentralization," he indicated. "The transition was really uneventful. You should know that the original school board that had served before decentralization was re-elected in 1970."

The one thing that this district did have in common with others, however, indicating the influence of decentralization, was its selection of a superintendent who reflected so much the values and needs of the district. As already described, he is a man who had lived and worked in the district for many years, he relates well to its diverse interest groups, he is a competent administrator, and he maintains a peaceful, stable environment within which the principals can run their schools.

Indicators of Student and District Performance

Historically, this has been one of the highest achieving districts in the city., It has had a large white middle class student population, and the numbers have not changed that appreciably since decentralization. Thus, in 1970-71, 9.2% were black, 3.9% Hispanic, and 86.4% white. In 1978, the numbers were not that different 11.1% black, 5.8% Hispanic, and 81.2% white. A district would be expected to have high reading scores with that kind of student population, and that is in fact what has occurred. (See Table 9.1).

TABLE 9.1

DISTRICT H
Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	1971	1979	Change
Two	2.7	3.4	0.7
Three	3.6	4.3	0.7
Four	4.6	5.9	1.3
Five	6.0	7.0	1.0
Six	6.7	7.8	1.1
Seven	7.4	8.9	1.5
Eight	8.7	10.0	1.3
Nine	9.8	10.0	1.2

In 1971, almost all grades in the district were reading above the average for the city as a whole. And after eight years, they have increased that lead. In other words, District H has out-performed the city as a whole. Table 9.2 indicates these trends.

TABLE 9.2

Changes in Reading Scores 1971-1979

Grade	District H	Citywide	Difference between District H & All Schools
Two	0.7	-0-	0.7
Three	0.7	0.1	0.6
Four	1.3	0.6	0.5
Five	1.0	0.7	0.3
Six	1.1	0.6	0.5
Seven	1.5	1.0	0.5
Eight	1.3	1.1	0.2
Nine	1.2	1.1	0.1

District H may thus be the exception to the rule that it is extremely difficult for districts reading above grade level to improve their performance even further. This district appears as a paradox. A superintendent who has had more of a mediating than program development style is nevertheless presiding over a district whose students have done very well in reading in the past and continue to do well. Part of the explanation is probably the students, and part may well be some of the curriculum coordinators, principals, and teachers.

Trends in math scores are roughly the same as those in reading. The district was nearly a grade ahead of the city-wide scores in 1971 (6.2 for the district and 5.4 for the city) and it widened that gap slightly by 1978 (5.9 for the city and 6.9 for the district).

Attendance rates in the district have also been high, but they have been declining since decentralizatrion, and the gap between the district and the city has begun to narrow. Thus, in 1970, the average daily attendance was 91.1, while the number was down somewhat to 89.2% in 1978. That is still above the citywide average that has gone from 81.1 to 82.8 during that time.

One significant change in District H that may possibly be a harbinger of things to come is its rates of vandalism. Crime is way up in the borough over the past decade and so, too, is vandalism in the schools. Thus, broken glass panes have increased from 5,900 in 1971 to 7,500 in 1978. Fires have increased from 2 to 5 for those years. And unlawful entries from 58 to 118 during that period. Informal social controls that used to operate so effectively in such a traditional area, seem to be breaking down somewhat.

As for staff changes, there has been very little overall increase in the representaton of minority professionals, with the exception of black principals. Those numbers have increased from 1 (2.3%) to 5 (10.6%) from 1971 to 1978. For the staff as a whole, blacks have only increased from 1.9% to 2.7% and Hispanics only from 0.4% to 1.5%. Whites are still 95.3% of the total staff. One big reason for this is the inaccessibility of the district. The trip is so long and time-consuming that most public school educators, like most other civil servants employed there, live in the district. Since its indigenous or residential black population is still very small, and since only a small portion of that group are likely to be going into education or some other white collar professional or business field, their numbers remain small in the school system; and the same can be said for Hispanics.

In sum, this is a district quite unlike all the others in New York City. It has always been decentralized to some extent, due to its inaccessibility and to the fact that it encompasses an entire borough. It still has a predominantly white middle class population, and though the crime rate and rates of school vandalism are increasing, its student performance remains high. Decentralization seems not to have had much impact either positively or negatively in this district. It was decentralized before and it remains so. It was relatively separate from the city before and also remains so, though to a lesser degree. If the numbers of minority students increase in the future, as seems likely, then this district's capacity to adapt will be tested for the first time. But even that increase is likely to be slow and at least for a while, not that big. Unlike all the other districts we have studied, this one may be much more a sui generis case, from which it is very difficult to generalize or extrapolate. In many respects, this district may still be much more oriented toward areas outside the city than the city itself, despite the over 15 years of experience with the bridge that now connects it to one of the boroughs.

CHAPTER 10 - Conclusions

Having analyzed how decentralization worked out in eight districts, representing a broad cross-section of New York City, we may now pull together the findings by indicating (a) its overall impact on the school and their communities; (b) what some of the benefits have been; (c) some of the problems; and (d) what changes may be needed both in the Decentralization Law and in administrative practices to make it work better.

As indicated in the first chapter, decentralization, as finally implemented in New York City, constituted only a limited test of the concept. Some powers were given to newly elected community school boards -- for example, to select a community superintendent; to select district office staff, principals, and some teachers; to establish a curriculum; to take over the administration of various support services like good programs, school maintemance, repairs and construction. At the same time, the Chancellor and the central board had the power to overrule the districts where they felt that the districts were not carrying out these functions adequately -- that is, where central board officials felt that corruption, undue patronage, or other kinds of mismanagement were involved.

In brief, New York City has experienced some political decentralization and some administrative decentralization, but with concurrent powers established at central to limit district autonomy on both counts.* The reason there wasn't a strong decentralization plan was that the political power of more status quo groups -- e.g., the teachers' union, supervisory associations, headquarters staff, and their constituencies was too strong for that to take place.

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* See, for example, Melvin Zimet, Decentralization and School Effectiveness, Teachers College Press, New York, 1973.

Nevertheless, some form of decentralization has been tried in New York City, with enough powers having been transferred to the districts to constitute at least some kind of test. And there are important lessons to be learned from that test, perhaps for other big city school systems as well as New York's, and for other service delivery agencies that experiment with various forms of decentralization.

INTERPRETING THE FINDINGS: PESSIMISTIC AND OPTIMISTIC VIEWS

There are at least two ways of viewing our overall findings. One is that decentralization *does* show promise in many districts and should be given a better chance (a) through efforts at mobilizing a stronger coalition in its support; (b) through legislative changes to give more authority to the districts and provide greater clarity as to the respective roles of headquarters and the districts; and (c) through changes in the districts themselves — e.g., in procedures for selecting CSB members, in the drawing of district lines, in the training programs for the CSB members which have been so limited thus far, and in the mechanisms for inter-district dissemination of effective educational practice that have also been quite limited.

A second view is that decentralization has not worked or, at best, has been accompanied by only marginal improvements in student performance that may well be due to other factors -- e.g., programs initiated by the central board to improve reading and math skills. Our position, based on the case studies, on information about other districts, and on aggregate statistical data, coincides much more with the first view.

Student Performance Under Decentralization - When decentralization was first proposed for New York City, many predictions were made about its possible consequences. The proponents believed that it would be beneficial -- that through community involvement in the schools, pupils' performance would improve. The critics believed that decentralization would have harmful effects -- that it would lead to disorganization, and even chaos, and pupils' performance would suffer. What has actually happened?

As measured by reading scores, pupils' performance under decentralization has improved. This conclusion is based on an examination of city-wide reading scores for grades 2 through 9, from 1971 to 1978. The net change in their performance is shown in Table 10.1. As the table shows, there was improvement in eight of the nine grades. In only one grade (the second) there was no change. Thus, the critics who predicted harmful consequences, at least on this measure of effectiveness, were wrong, and the proponents appear to be right.

Table 10.1 - Reading Scores for 1971 and 1978

Grades	1971	1978	Change
two	2.8	2.8	.0
three	3.5	3.6	+ .1
four	4.3	4.9	+ .6
five	5.2	5.9	+ .7
six	6.2	6.8	+ .6
seven	6.5	7.5	+1.0
eight	7.5	8.6	+1.1
nine	8.6	9.7	+1.1

There are, of course, other possible explanations for the improvement in reading scores besides decentralization. For example, it could result from selective migration in and out of the city -- from an influx of students from higher socio-economic families and an out-migration of students from lower socio-economic families. But in New York City, just the opposite has occurred during the period of decentralization. The number of poor families has not decreased since 1971, and middle and upper middle class families have continued to abandon the public schools by moving to the suburbs or by enrolling their children in private and parochial schools. In short, selective migration is not a plausible alternative explanation of the improvement in reading scores.

Another possible explanation is that the school system has changed its reading tests during this period. It did, indeed, change the tests several times from 1971 to 1979. Our conclusion, in any case, is not affected by these changes. In the years 1971 to 1979, pupils' performance in the district as compared with the city-wide average improved. Thus, a change in reading test does not account for the improvement during the period of decentralization.

Given the limitation of these data, one might still want to be skeptical. But even the most conservative conclusion would be that decentralization did not harm the children, and this evidence suggests that it benefited them.

A MODEL ON PRE-REQUISITES FOR DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

One useful way to summarize what we have found, at least from a public policy point of view, is to develop an empirically derived model of the pre-requisites for district effectiveness, based on the case studies. This is to move the discussion from the descriptive and analytic to a more normative level. The case studies describe and analyze what happened in these districts under decentralization. We may now indicate some of the lessons of that experience in terms of a summary model.

The model abstracts from those case studies what we see as the essential forces that bear on district performance. It does not describe any single district, since the positive elements are only present in varying degrees in any particular case. Moreover, we have purposely not undertaken to rank the districts in terms of degrees of effectiveness, since that task is too complex and ambiguous to have much meaning. For one thing, effectiveness is, at best, a multi-dimensional concept, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to make judgments as to which dimension is more important. We have made mention of bottom line and process indicators, and sorting out their significance is beyond the scope of this study. In addition, many of the causal or situational variables are also multi-dimensional and complex and subject only to varying degrees of control at the district level. So rather than refer to health or pathology in any single case, or to present an extraorinarily complex summary statement describing how the districts differ on all these dimensions, we begin instead by developing this model.

Table 10.2 contains the main elements of the model which essentially includes the key variables in our study. A discussion then follows about some of those variables.

TABLE 10.2
PRE-REQUISITES FOR DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

	More Effective	Less Effective
1.	COMMUNITY POLITICS	
(a)	Relatively stabilized	Turbulent
	No major leadership struggles within and across interest groups.	Leadership conflict.
	No major disruptions of CSB meetings.	CSB meetings chaotic.
	CSB and district have much legitimacy within the community.	Community distrust of CSB and district.
	Schools relatively free of violence.	Much unrest in schools.
(b)	Education-oriented leadership in power.	Political interests in power
	Parents, civic-minded groups prevail rather than political clubs, churches, and anti-poverty agencies.	Political clubs, church.
2.	COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARD	
(a)	Quite cohesive. A majority coalition.	Very factionalized.
(b)	Clear role definition and priorities.	No clear sense about its role.
(c)	Assumes policy role and delegates much admninistrative authority to superintendent.	Does not assume policy role and deeply involved in administration.
(d)	Much role consensus with superintendent on his and their authority.	Little role consensus with superintendent.
(e)	Strong chairperson with political base and skills to develop a consensus.	No strong chairperson.
(f)	Power in hands of parent and civic-minded, profession-oriented people.	Power held by politically-oriented members, aspiring politicians, "power brokers" representing narrow group interests.
(g)	Little or no CSB involvement in "patronage" appointments of staff.	
(h)	CSB members spend much time on board activity, active committees, good attendance at meetings.	Much CSB involvement in handing out jobs. Committees meet rarely, if ever. Attendance at CSB meetings sporadic.

TABLE 10.2 (continued)

	More Effective	Less Effective
3.	SUPERINTENDENT	
(a)	Has much administrative and even some "policy" authority	Little authority.
(b)	Takes many curriculum and administrative initiatives.	Takes few such initiatives. Sometimes too busy in political turf struggles with CSB.
	A STRONG SUPERINTENDENT	A WEAK SUPERINTENDENT
(bi)	Developed cohesive cadre of district office staff, working closely with superintendent.	Does not control all district office staff, some of them holdovers and/or loyal to others -- e.g., CSB members, political groups.
(bii)	Has achieved much administrative stability, both in continuity of staff and in their support of superintendent's programs.	Much less administrative stability. Conflicting philosophies and loyalites among staff.
(biii)	Has evolved one or a few broad program directions.	No clear, coherent program directions.
(biv)	Programs fit community needs.	Less fit of programs to community needs.
(bv)	Much staff development activity.	Minimal staff development.
(bvi)	Collaborative, working relations with teachers' and supervisors' unions.	Arms-length or adversarial relations
(bvii)	Many program linkages with outside agencies -- e.g., universities, cultural agencies, employers, other districts, parks.	Minimal program linkages.
(bviii)	Much parent participation activity that the superintendent has initiated in formal and imformal programs	Minimal parent participation programs.
(bix)	Much initiative and success in securing outside, state and federally-funded programs.	Minimal initiative and success in this.
(bx)	Developed strong productivity orientation. Much effective monitoring and evaluation and program change based on that.	Minimal monitoring and program change based on it.

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TABLE 10.2 (continued)

	More Effective	Less Effective
4. BOTTOM LINE, PERFORMANCE MEASURES		
	(a) Reading scores improved and/or held their own, relative to city-wide trend.	Reading scores declined.
	(b) Math scores same as above.	Math scores declined.
	(c) Attendance same as above.	Attendance delcined.
	(d) Placement in specialized high schools same as above.	Placement declined.
	(e) Vandalism stabilized and/or declined.	Vandalism increased.

It is thus possible to delineate many of the factors that contribute to or reflect district effectiveness. One of the most important seems to be the presence of a "strong" superintendent. We mean by the term "strong" at least two things: (a) the superintendent has much formal authority to run the district in ways he or she deems appropriate; and (b) the superintendent uses that authority to take many initiatives to improve education in the district. It is possible to have the first without the second, though not the other way around. That is, without a base and some legitimacy, no superintendent would be able to provide much leadership, a condition that exists in some community districts in New York City.

The first condition helps insulate the superintendent from undue political pressures, either from board members or from community groups -- e.g., for patronage appointments, for favored treatment in budget decisions, etc. In these cases, the CSB established a wall, protecting the superintendent so that he may run the district. The superintendent is still held accountable for student and district performance, but there is minimal interference in day-to-day administration. Moreover, the superintendent may have some broad policy-making powers as well -- as, for example, in establishing an educational philosophy for the district and setting up programs and administrative procedures for its implementation.

In some instances, the superintendent may have aggressively seized such formal authority and had it institutionalized. This is most likely to happen when the CSB is inactive, weak, and/or divided and puts up only token resistance.

The second condition involves the superintendent taking many initiatives over and above having such formal authority: (i) in curriculum and instruction (educational); (ii) in administration (managerial); and (iii) in mobilizing constituency support (political), all of which may contribute to educational improvements.

Our general argument is that whether a superintendent is "strong" or "weak" thus has many dimensions. And the more the above-listed ones are present (see the bi-bx categories in Table 10.2), the stronger is the superintendent and the more effective is the district.

Management Style - At the same time, not all "strong" superintendents need have the same management styles or behave in the same ways. Thus, there is more than one way to run an effective district, and one of the positive effects of decentralization has been that it has facilitated such a diversity of management styles, as the case studies indicate. On curriculum, for example, superintendents in some districts that maintained or improved their reading scores had a very explicit educational philosophy that they imposed on the schools, while those in other districts that had a similar performance did not. Thus, the superintendent in District D had what he and his staff referred to as a humanistic, open education philosophy that they articulated endlessly for the general public and their school staff and CSB, while the one in District E had a very traditional, structured, "back to basics" approach, emphasizing a uniform, standardized curriculum basic skills instruction in conventional classrooms, etc. The difference between these two districts in curriculum style could hardly have been greater. The first district favored a "learning through doing", highly individualized and affective approach to learning, while the other one emphasized a "production managemenet, Frederic Taylor-like style, with much formalization, standardization, and uniformity, including a variety of controls over teacher and student behavior -- e.g., audits, tests, in-service training for "marginal" teachers, etc. neither could be seen as necessarily "better" than the other. Rather, they were just different, and as our study indicated, these differences were a function, not only of the superintendent's values, but of the situation. In each case, they fit the educational needs and learning styles of students -- of affluent, middle class whites in one case and or poor, low achieving blacks in the other; and of educators attuned to open education approaches in the one, as opposed to educators who had not yet established uniform, minimal standards in the other.

Yet, we studied two other districts that had held their own in reading scores where there was no explicit educational philosophy that the superintendent and his staff imposed on schools. In the white middle class district in one of the outer boroughs, while the superintendent had a somewhat traditional philosopy himself, supporting traditional classrooms and more structured approaches to learning, both of which matched the value of his many conservative, middle class constituencies, he accepted and even supported those open classroom schools where they were preferred by the principal and parents. In fact, he even appointed an active advocate of open education as principal to one of those schools, much to the amazement of both the principal and parents. In this instance, orchestrating a diversity of curriculum styles became the superintendent's strategy, matching the diversity of population groups that the district served. At the same time, since retaining and attracting back the white middle class was a major concern, the superintendent developed a series of curriculum approaches -- magnet schools, pre-K programs, and programs for the gifted and talented -- that, in turn, matched the preferences of that population group.

One could make the same point about there being no one best way as related to other management style considerations. For example, with regard to decentralizing to the local school level, the superintendent in District E has exercised strong central leadership and has imposed a uniform curriculum on the schools, leaving little room for local option. By contrast, supporting school level autonomy is a key feature of the superintendent's management style in the middle class Brooklyn district. Both are effective.

The most effective management style is thus the one that seems to most fit the situation of the district being managed. Several situational factors are particularly important. One is the learning styles of students and the values of their parents. Liberal, white middle class communities, for example, may prefer open education and less structured classrooms, while poor black areas or conservative white ethnic communities may prefer and need a more traditional and structured approach. A second is the extent of diversity of

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communities within a district. The more diverse they are, the better it may be for the superintendent to refrain from mandating curriculum and decentralize those decisions instead of the local school level, allowing curriculum preferences to bubble up from the principal, teachers, and parents. Still a third is the extent of demographic change within a district. The more the change, the more flexible the superintendent should probably be in providing autonomy for individual schools and in allowing them to determine their curriculum and staffing, including the selection of the principal.*

At the same time, despite management style differences, effective districts may have certain features in common, as related to the superintendent's position and behavior. As indicated above, the CSB must have delegated much formal authority to the superintendent, concentrate itself on setting broad policy, and attain much agreement with the superintendent on their respective spheres of authority (role consensus). Beyond that, the superintendent needs a strong political base in the community to ensure his continued authority in the event of changes in the CSB. He needs a well-trained business manager to keep track of informtion on district resources and expenditures. He also needs a strong deputy and an upper middle management cadre of curriculum directors to whom he can delegate responsibility for administration, educational programs, and day to day grievances that are not resolved at the school level. He needs to secure a satisfactory working relationship with teachers and principals, both on an individual basis and through their unions, preferably one in which he inspires their loyalty. He needs to be effective not only in initiating educational programs (entrepreneurship) that match community needs and values, but also at ensuring their effective implementation (administration), providing necessary support services and building in a monitoring and feedback mechanism that is then used to facilitate program changes as experience indicates. He needs in this regard an active staff development program to upgrade professional skills of teachers and supervisors, particularly those in low performing schools. He needs professional proposal writers and a strong administrator of funded programs to secure needed outside monies. He needs to have such programs integrated with tax levy ones so that they complement one another -- e.g., institutionalized through tax levy funds effective new programs developed through outside funding. In this same vein, he needs to integrate various curriculum specialists into a collaborative educational strategy, with each reinforcing the others' programs. He needs to handle headquarters, through effective negotiation for needed resources and district autonomy, and/or through creative non-compliance with headquarters policies that frees the district from having to negotiate continuously with headquarters staff. And he needs to develop a network of relations with district-based and outside agencies for collaborative programs and with elected officials to help in securing city and outside funds.

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*A large body of literature in the organizational behavior field, emphasizing contingency approaches to management, points to this view. See, for example, Henry Mintzberg, The Structuring of Organizations, Prentice Hall, 1979, and Robert H. Miles, Macro Organizational Behavior, Goodyear, 1980.

This rather formidable list constitutes what might be called an organizational and behavioral profile of what is required to run an effective district in a decentralized system like New York City's. It applies, with appropriate modifications, to any districts we developed it in large part as a composite of the strengths of all the districts and superintendents we studied. Some are stronger on some dimensions than others, with the assumption being that effective districts will be stronger on more of them than less effective districts. In that sense, this is an ideal type model, never realized in any single case, but specifying the pre-requisites for district effectiveness. Each of the case studies highlighted which of these characteristics was present in the various districts and indicated further how the superintendent had maintained it. Examples may thus be drawn from those chapters.

Determinants and Consequences of Management Style and Superintendent Differences -

A main question of the study is when strong superintendents are most likely to emerge in districts. We have found a number of conditions giving rise to that. A key one is political stability. Those districts whose educational politics have settled down have much better prospects than politically unstable districts. In the latter instance, the CSB is likely to be quite factionalized, and its membership is usually unstable as well — with frequent changes in ethnic, economic, and geographic representation, often a reflection, in turn, of population changes -- e.g., ethnic succession. Those demographic and constituency representation changes in CSB membership are often associated, in turn, with changing board preferences for superintendents or, at best, with considerable political conflict between the CSB and superintendent, whose limited resources are spent in struggling to secure a mandate for key decisions (policy and administrative) while many board members constrain him by being deeply involved in administration (e.g., patronage), to solidify their political base. In these situations, having to secure the five necessary votes of a nine-member board for many administrative actions becomes a major problem of the superintendent and it keeps deflecting the superintendent's resources from other tasks -- e.g., developing and implementing effective programs, staff development, and trying to secure outside funding. These districts have typically had many superintendents since decentralization began.

Politically stable districts, on the other hand, often have less turnover among superintendents, and the ones who serve there are given much authority. They are thus likely to remain in office for a long enough time to provide the continuity in educational philosophy and staff that is so necessary to develop effective programs, and they are given the flexibility to do so.

The question remains as to why some districts are more stable politcally than others. At least two factors seem to contribute. One of the most important is the existence of a strong leader on the CSB, usually as its chairperson, with the political base and skills necessary to mobilize the consensus needed within the CSB to insulate the superintendent. Such a leader may be effective in coalescing various factions on the board and in the wider community through political trade offs (e.g., providing jobs in antipoverty agencies or other community organizations) and thereby keep some militant groups from staging protests that might interfere with the development and implementation of potentially effective programs. We cited examples of such leaders in several of the case studies.

Having an infrastructure of established parent and community organizations also help considerably in maintaining political stability. It existed before decentralization in many middle class districts, and they were able to adapt easily to the change, just grafting it on to a pre-existing structure, while peacefully absorbing newly emerging groups. Indeed, one of the ironies of decentralization has been that it worked more smoothly at first in the very middle class districts where there was so much initial resistance to it -- those districts where many New York City educators lived, as did civil servants from other local government agencies who feared that it might soon spread to their agency as well.

By contrast, the poverty areas that wanted decentralization the most didn't have, at least initially, the local political and parent organizations to make it work easily. They often experienced much community conflict in the early stages of decentralization, deflecting from attention to educational matters, until there was such a settling down process.* This is not at all to argue that conflict per se has always been dysfunctional for improved education, since it often calls the district's attention to important issues that were not adequately addressed in the past -- for example, forcing the district to take corrective action in cases where principals, teachers, or programs were not adequately serving students and the wider school constituencies. We are referring here, however, to poorly contained, run-away conflicts that went beyond those constructive purposes, having less to do with educational improvements than with factional politics and leadership struggles among community groups.**

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*The conflict was usually over the distribution of program funds, jobs, and power -- in other words, over which groups and leaders would get what under decentralization.

**Daniel Bell and Virginia Held highlight this problem in inner cities in their article "The Community Revolution," The Public Interest, 16, Summer, 1969.

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On the other hand, we have found several poverty area districts that have moved beyond an early stage of political turbulence to one of much more social peace and stability, and it is incorrect to say that only white middle class areas have been in a position to benefit from decentralization. Strong superintendents, supported by a relatively stable politics, exist throughout the city, though there remains somewhat more turbulence, on balance, in poverty area districts that came into decentralization without any pre-established community and parent organizations. The most turbulence, however, now exists in districts in transition, that is, in those undergoing the most ethnic succession, from white middle and working class to poor minority residents and public school students.

A critical question the study addresses is how district politics and management style may affect student performance. Is it true that relatively stable communities with strong superintendents have better student performance and, if so, why? What is there about politics and administration that relates to the classroom teacher and the student? After all, community politics and district administration are seemingly quite removed from the day-to-day workings of the classroom. Why couldn't teachers just do what they thought best or were doing before, without being disturbed by such seemingly distant forces?

Our field studies suggest a number of ways that these outside forces affect the classroom. First, when political stability and its correlates — a strong superintendent and staff continuity — exist, the district is able to develop a more coherent, long-term approach to educational programming and staff development than when this is not the case. Programs can be more easily developed, tested, evaluated, and modified, without constant disruption or major changes in philosophy and emphasis. The reader should note in that regard that the present superintendent in four districts that have many effective programs has served since the early 1970s, with much continuity of staff, educational philosophy, and program as well. While we would not argue that stability and continuity always positively affect student performance, that seems oftento be the case, for the reasons just stated. Beyond that, superintendents in stable districts where theydo have authority and a mandate to lead are much less likely to dissipate their limited resources in political struggles with their boards and can allocate more of such resources to effective problem-solving.

Moreover, staff morale seems better, with some exceptioins, in stable than in unstable districts. There is less likelihood, for example, that teachers will become demoralized and want to transfer out of districts where they perceive the superintendent and district office to have the support of the CSB to pursue programs that improve education. A dramatic case is District (C) that we reported on in chapter 4 , where morale among principals, and, in turn, among teachers seems quite low, partly as a result of the sharp conflict between the CSB and superintendent which is very visible in CSB meetings and is widely knwon throughout the district. The superintendent there is so taken up in a struggle for survival that he has little left over for the kinds of staff development and program improvement that we found in the stable districts. Thus, he and his staff estimate that up to 2/3 of his time is spent battling with his board on a wide range of policy and administrative decisions.

RESULTS OF DECENTRALIZATION: BOTTOM LINE AND PROCESS INDICATORS

As we indicated above and in the first chapter, the ultimate test of decentralization has to be what it does for students in classrooms. That is very difficult to assess in any clear and unambiguous way, because of all the other factors that affect such measures of student performance as reading scores. One of the main factors is the SES backgrounds of students, and the continued increases in the proportion of poor minority students and the corresponding decline of white middle class students since decentralization have no doubt helped to pull the scores down. Opponents of decentralization may argue that it helped facilitate these changes, but they had been going on long before decentralization, and we found little evidence that it contributed any to the trend. Indeed, if anything, it may well have served to retain or attract back middle class students in many districts where a concerted effort has been made to develop enriched and/or alternative programs for this group.

The other significant factor has been the city's fiscal crisis, leading to staff cutbacks, to larger class sizes, and to the shrinkage or even elimination of many programs. Judging from our observations of districts and schools, that has to have taken its toll also, probably contributing to some further departures of white middle class students.

What is so interesting is that despite these problems, reading scores in the New York City public schools have gone up since 1970. And those in several of the districts we studied have gone up even higher than the citywide average. Districts (B) and (E) are perhaps the best examples of that, and we have attributed at least part of their big improvement to the superintendent's initiatives in each case to improve the curricula and instructional services of those districts.

We believe the case for or against decentralization has to be made in terms of many of the process criteria we have mentioned in the first chapter in addition to the bottom line ones. Decentralization advocates argued that the attainment of social peace, of a legitimacy for the schools as a community institution, of a fit between the schools and the community in regard to curriculum, instructional styles, staff backgrounds and orientations, and program linkages, and of more program innovation and/or more efficiency in existing programs might well result from that change. We have found many districts to have moved in this direction, including many minority districts whose politics were very turbulent and whose education programs were not working well at the start of decentralization.

These developments have taken place more in some districts than in others, as the case studies indicate, but at least some are present in all the districts we have studied. In brief, a community school district system has come into existence in New York City as a result of decentralization, that has provided for enough social peace, local level flexibility, and openness so that schools can be more effectively responsive and accountable to their local constituencies. And we turn now to a summary account of those developments that we take to be important indicators of some of the benefits of decentralization and that seem not to have been present to the same degree under the previous, more centralized system. We base the account on four of the districts where saw many of these productive developments take place to some considerable degree.

Case #1: District B The Hispanic poverty area district in the inner borough is one very good example of what is possible under decentralization. Its CSB selected an entrepreneurial, energetic, young Hispanic male as its superintendent in 1973; and he was in many respects a "new style" superintendent who would probably not have been appointed under the old system. He has provided much educational leadership in new program development and staffing, as well as in community development activity, as our chapter on that district indicated. He had been born in the community, had taught and run programs there, and is deeply committed to its development, as are his staff. He thus represents a new, upwardly mobile, minority professional who personified the district's most deeply held aspirations and beliefs, and whose upward mobility has in no way lessened his ties to this community. In fact, if anything, it may have deepened them, as he "returned" to the community in the early 1970s, after having served in a staff position at headquarters, using his credentials, skills, and network of professional relations to help improve the quality of education immeasurably over what it had been before.

After bringing in many new staff (as teachers, program directors, principals, curriculum coordinators, proposal writers, and administrators), he facilitated the development in this district of some of the most promising programs in the city. He and his staff set up a network of 12 alternative schools, each concentrating on a particular program theme -- for example, performing arts, careers, communications. They brought in tremendous amounts of outside funds for new programs. One of these programs, involving students traveling all over the city, visiting various cultural, business and government agencies for purposes of enriching their experiences and concepts to improve reading skills has resulted in big improvements in student performance and has been widely acclaimed, as have the alternative schools. The district has developed, in addition, a network of bilingual schools that is beginning to show promise. And it has many collaborative programs with community agencies --

for example, a health program with a nearby hospital, an environmental education program with an adjacent district, and a tutoring program with one of the city's specialized high schools. Moreover, it has done this with a white, Hispanic, and black staff that has become one of the most integrated in the city. And the district has reached a level of social peace and political stability that had not existed there before, as factions within the community were in continued conflict with one another and with the schools over the quality of programs and over who would control them and benefit from them.

This district has gone a long way in making its schools into a community institution rather than as alien outposts which is what many of them were seen as being before. And it now has large numbers of graduates who go off to the the city's elite, specialized high schools and to academic private and boarding schools. Some of these graduates return to the district to express their appreciation for the preparation its schools gave them for their later academic experiences.

There have been problems in this district which we documented in that chapter, but it constitutes a significant example of what is possible under decentralization. Decentralization in this instance helped create the conditions under which an energetic, professional, and yet community-minded superintendent became the catalyst for many educational improvement activities. And those activities resulted in big improvements in reading scores, far beyond city-wide improvements, and in later academic attainments of graduates. The actions of a strong political leader on the CSB who helped recruit this superintendent and establish his authority were very important and received documentation in our analysis. But it was then the superintendent and his staff who developed and maintained a dynamism in this district that did not exist before decentralization.

Case #2: District E A second example is the poor black district in one of the outer boroughs, whose able superintendent has also been there since the early 1970s. A black male from outside the city, he is another example of a "new style" superintendent who would unlikely have been appointed under the old system. When the CSB selected him as superintendent, this district was in political turmoil. Bands of black youth and community activists were disrupting schools and CSB meetings. One such group had barged into his office immediately after his appointment, charging that he would be exploiting this community and its students for his own benefit. Over the past several years, however, this district has reached a degree of political stability and of legitimacy that seem directly related to the many program and administrative improvements that he initiated.

The schools in this district were typical of those in poor minority areas. Little teaching was going on in many of the schools, teachers and principals had low expectations of what students could learn, there was often high teacher absenteeism, students roamed the halls endlessly, there was much violence inside the schools and much vandalism. Moreover, there was no uniform curriculum. Teachers were either running custodial operations or "doing their own thing." If a student moved from one school to another, and this happened often with the district's high mobility rate, there was little continuity in educational experience. Indeed, it was almost like going to anthoer country.

The superintendent has dealt very proactively with these difficult problems in ways that were not possible under the old system and on a district-wide basis. At least the things that he did and the results he got had never happened in any poor black district before decentralization. He moved to standardize the curriculum through the use of explicit learning objectives, thereby establishing and maintaining minimum standards and, in the process, raising teacher expectations as to what black students from poverty backgrounds could learn.

The program was strongly supported by various administrative procedures: systematic audits of classrooms and schools by district office staff; frequent (monthly, bimonthly) testing of students; special assistance to "marginal" teachers and to principals in schools where reading scores were considerably below those of others in the district serving similar student populations; and a visitation program in which principals and assistant principals would spend a few weeks in another school to sensitize them to improving administrative and supervisory practices.

In addition, the superintendent has developed a broad-based, junior high school improvement program in an effort to retain middle class students who had been leaving in great numbers after elementary school, as they do in many other districts. It is obviously aimed as well at those who could be staying anyway. The district now has two alternative, satellite junior highs and several programs in existing ones for gifted and talented students.

The results of these many programs and administrative initiatives are quite dramatic, as reading scores have risen far beyond those city-wide. The district has also developed a cadre of black professionals -- principals, curriculum coordinators, and teachers, many of whom grew up in the area, live there now, and are sensitive to the needs and values of the students.

There still remain some problems in this district, and we have described them in Chapter 6. But the prevailing tone is one of improvement and a prospect of still further gains, attributable in very large part to the leadership of this superintendent, who is another product of decentralization.

Our other two examples come from districts with a much larger white middle class population, indicating that the benefits of decentralization seem to exist in many parts of the city. Some of the same patterns described in Districts B and E hold there as well.

Case #3: District G The white middle class district described in Chapter 8 illustrates still further the improvements that seem to have accompanied decentralization. There, a somewhat conservative CSB, oriented toward more traditional styles of instruction and curriculum, recruited an experienced, mainstream, and somewhat traditional superintendent in the early 1970s, and he has been there ever since. Indeed, the fit between his background, skills, and philosophy on the one side and the community's values and expressed needs on the other has been equally as strong as in the Hispanic and black districts just described.

A major development in this district since decentralization has been its increasing black student population who now constitute roughly 40% of its total enrollment. Many of this district's programs have been developed in the context of that change, and they have been implemented in ways that have been closely attuned to community conditions. Thus, the district has a very effective desegregation program involving the bussing of close to 2,000 black students from overcrowded schools in the north to underutilized ones in the south. This has been done with strong leadership from the CSB and superintendent, with much community participation, and much district initiative in securing outside funding. The district secured sizeable ESAA monies (for remedial programs and extra staff) to service the bussed-in black students and for remediation as well to white indigenous students in receiving schools who have learning problems. In addition, the district has secured funds for enrichment programs (pre-K programs, those for gifted and talented students, and magnet schools) to prevent white middle class flight and to attract back into the district white middle class students who had left.

Previous studies of the school headquarters bureaucracy suggest that this district's initiatives in developing its district-wide desegregation plan are probably much greater than might ever have come from headquarters.* And, in fact, the director of the headquarters central zoning office indicates that this is one of the best desegregation programs of its kind that he has ever seen.

In brief, we have in this instance an illustration of how a district desegregation and neighborhood stabilization strategy, initiated under decentralization and taking advantage of increased authority and flexibility under decentralization, may be much more effective in reaching those important goals in improving student performance than was ever possible under centralization. The reader will recall, in that regard, the big improvement in reading scores for both the bussed-in minority students and indigenous whites, as well as the fact that this district has held up its reading scores, in the aggregate, over the past several years, while it was changing from 20% to almost 40% poor minority.

A further strategy in this district, also facilitated by decentralization, and pursued in several others as well, has been to push decentralization down to the local school level, to a point where principals, teachers, and parent association leaders have a determining influence on the educational philosophy and curriculum in their schools. This superintendent, for example, has not mandated the curriculum and instructional styles that should prevail in the schools, but has merely set general standards and policy parameters within which programs must exist. In this instance, the superintendent followed a strategy of orchestrating diversity, in recognition of differences in values and style preferences of parents throughout the district. Some preferred open education and heterogeneously grouped classes, while others preferred a traditional, more structured approach and one that grouped students by ability. Such a condition of school autonomy sometimes existed under centralization, as an aggressive principal might defy the dictates of the district and central. However, there is greater likelihood of its happening under decentralization, where schools have much more flexibility and where technical assistance and support services are available in a district office not nearly as removed from the school and its problems as headquarters staff downtown.

Ultimately, it might well be desirable to push decentralization down to the local school level, as many districts like this one have already begun to do. But that may only be possible under a decentralized, community school system where needed monitoring and technical assistance services are located close to the school and provided by staff intimately familiar wtih local school conditions.

Case #4: District D - Our last example is a once predominantly white middle and upper middle class district in an outer borough that now has a poor Hispanic student enrollment of over 50%. The CSB there selected a strong, forceful educator from within the district as superintendent who reflected its values, and he and his staff have developed an extraordinarily rich curriculum, with many outstanding programs. A charismatic person with interpersonal, public relations, and administrative skills, he has gathered around him a highly professional district office staff and principals who have served the district well.

One of the hallmarks of his success has been his forceful development of a humanistic, open education philosophy, emphasizing individualized approaches to instruction, and dealing with the emotional as well as intellectual development of students. That philosophy is, in turn, embodied in a vast array of educational programs in every subject area, and adapted to the needs of all ethnic and economic groups. Indeed, this district, under the superintendent's leadership, has developed one of the most professional curriculum and staff development operations we have seen. The emphasis is on informal education approaches, "hands on" learning, and many out-of-the-classroom experiences that are opposite of the approach in District G, but they have had good results in this district as that one has had there.

Some of the exemplary programs include many collaborative efforts with outside agencies, including Lincoln Center, a local zoo and planetarium, schools of education and a boy scout camp away from the city. The district has, in addition, produced impressive curriculum bulletins in a variety of files -- science, social studies, reading, math -- and they are in wide demand elsewhere. It has gone far in developing a coherent education program strategy by facilitating much collaboration among curriculum specialists in the district office, between that office and the schools, and between state and federally funded programs on the one side and city funded ones on the other. Indeed, its use of outside funds to develop innovative programs that fill important gaps in existing curricula offerings and its follow-up activity in then institutionalizing the best of those programs under city funding reflects a very creative approach.

This district, like the others, has problems, some of them serious, but

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it nevertheless reflects some extraordinarily productive approaches under decentralization. A close look at how these programs have developed indicates how important decentralization has been for their initiation and continued effectiveness.

While these four districts are among the shining examples of how decentralization has facilitated improvements in education, they only indicate in somewaht more dramatic form processes that have taken place in many others as well. And there are some general patterns that have emerged here that seem to be a direct result of decentralization. For one thing, the schools and districts generally have a legitimacy that they clearly lacked in the 1960s, particularly in minority areas. There is a degree of political stability in relation to public education that had not existd before. Moreover, the fit between the schools and the community is much greater than it ever was. The superintendent appointed by these CSBs are clearly commmunity-oriented. Before decentralization, headquarters-appointed superintendents were "organization types". They were oriented upward in that kind of centralized, machine bureaucracy to headquarters, rather than outward to the community, with many of them aspiring to promotions to higher headquarters positions.

The same pattern holds for principals. While the opponents of decentralization sometimes cite particular "ethnic" appointments of principals, implying that these people are not as qualified as their predecessors or as others from the civil service lists, we have noted a much greater community sensitivity and concern among the principals under decentralization. Many of these districts have seen the early retirement, both of old-line superintendents and principals, largely because they found it difficult to adapt to new demands. It had become clear to them that under decentralization, they served at the pleasure of the CSB and were much more vulnerable than before to demands of the board and parent groups. In some cases, able educators and administrators were lost to the system, but in many more, people whose values and skills were now obsolescent were leaving a system that needed other types. On balance, with some exceptions, that has probably been a very good thing.

Perhaps most impressive of all has been the development and, in some cases the fluorishing, of new educational programs and program linkages with outside agencies that seem a direct result of the greater flexibility and openness of the system under decentralization. Many of these programs and linkages have been customized to the particular learning styles, values, and needs of students in ways that were not possible under the old system. Each of the districts cited above represents the development of a comprehensive curriculum strategy. In the Hispanic district, it was a combination of alternative schools, a bilingual network, and many enriched programs through federal funding. In the black district, it was the introduction of standards and uniformity, in a setting where neither existed before. In the white district experiencing a big influx of blacks, it was a neighborhood stabilization approach, with strong efforts to retain the middle class. And in the formerly white district with the Hispanic influx, it was an open education approach that then became adapted to students in Hispanic areas as well.

Each of these districts had the flexibility under decentralization to do what its superintendent and CSB thought was required to best adapt to the needs of students and the community. Centralized bureaucracies do not encourage that, and we found enough of it taking place to make us conclude that decentralization is working in many places and could work in many others, if given the needed support.

CHAPTER 11: Unresolved Problems

Despite the many positive developments under decentralization, there remain some unresolved problems that will have to be dealt with in the future, no matter what system of decentralization is adopted. These problems related to (a) the functioning of CSBs; (b) CSB-superintendent relations; (c) the functioning of headquarters; (d) the role of parents; (e) curriculum and instruction; (f) staff development; (g) integration; (h) marginal teachers and principals; (i) district monitoring and evaluation of programs; (j) district boundaries; and (k) particular education policy and governance issues as related to the junior high schools, high schools, bilingual programs and special education. While this constitutes an all-encompassing list of diverse matters, our study suggests that all must be considered in conjunction with future strategies on decentralization.

(a) Community School Boards - A number of negative developments have emerged under decentralization as related to the composition and functioning of CSBs. One of the main ones seems to have been the marked decline in the quality of CSB members since 1970 and particularly since the 1975 and 1977 CSB elections, with the 1980 ones being too recent to permit any assessment. When decentralization began, many board members throughout the city were optimistic about the prospect of improving education in their district. Though they had not been adequately prepared for the experience, they had a sense of mission, as the first elected body that was embarked on this exciting new experiment. They tended to be very dedicated, and they spent long hours on board affairs, often meeting from early evening until well after midnight. For many, it was almost like another full-time job, and in several instances, family life and marriages were severely upset by the time taken in board activities. These first boards were particularly effective at negotiating at school headquarters in getting the Chancellor to respond to their urgent requests -- as, for example, for more space to relieve overcrowding. Moreover, many of these first CSB members were either parents or professionals -- attorneys accountants, engineers, educators, executives --- and the latter used their skills to help the district get established. Also, despite their limited training in preparation for the position, these early boards soon concentrated on policy matters and delegated administrative authority to their superintendent. There were some exceptions to these trends, but the predominant pattern was as just described.

Another prevailing pattern, however of a potentially more negative nature, was the unrepresentative composition of these early boards. In mixed districts that included middle class and poverty areas, and there were many of them, the middle class areas were vastly over-represented, even in many instances where they constituted a small segment of student enrollment. In several of these districts, parents and community leaders in unrepresented poverty areas understandably resented the imbalance, yet it didn't always lead to decisions favoring one area or group. Many of the white middle class parents and professionals on these early boards took a broader district-wide perspective in their board decisions than was feared.

The reason for the representational imbalance was, of course, quite simple. The white middle class areas consistently turned out the most votes in CSB elections. And in some districts where a militant, community control group resided, activists resented the compromise decentralization law so much that they urged their communities not to vote, as a gesture of protest.

Perhaps more important in many respects than patterns of geographic and ethnic representation were other trends in school board membership. Starting with the 1973 elections, there was a noticeable shift from parent and professionally-oriented CSB members to those supported by the unions, particularly the UFT; by political clubs; parochial school interests (Catholic and Orthodox Jewish); and by anti-poverty agencies. The UFT got more actively involved, as it increasingly saw the importance of protecting teacher interests against boards and superintendents too strongly committed to community control. Political clubs became increasingly involved as it became apparent that there were jobs to be had and handed out. Religious groups were active to protect the interests of their parochial schools whose state and federal funds were distributed through the district office. And anti-poverty agencies were interested both in jobs and in community control over the professional staff.

One result of these changes was that CSBs became much more narrowly "political" in the sense of looking out for particular group interests that were often unrelated to education. Another was that they became increasingly involved in administration, particularly in handing out jobs and patronage, and tended to abdicate their policy role. They became, in that sense, much less like a board and more like an additional administrative body that might delay the implementation of programs and introduce non-educational criteria in critical decisions. What has emerged in some districts has been CSB control by local "power brokers" who represent organizational interests that do not include parents and are not oriented toward educational considerations. Indeed, one reflection of this trend has been a decline in parent power in many districts where, at most, only 1 or 2 members of a 9-member board come from parent ranks. That represents in many respects a perversion of the original goals of decentralization. Instead of leading to "community control", it has led in some instances to political clubhouse or increased church control.

Nevertheless, some dedicated people, including parents and public-interested professionals, remained on CSBs through the 1973 and 1975 elections, but by 1977 and certainly in 1980, even they had left. Some left after becoming disillusioned with decentralization as it was then working. They felt that CSBs had few powers and that they could be more effective elsewhere. The fiscal crisis reinforced that feeling to many who felt that the most important power arena was citywide, to restore some of the cuts. Still others left because of their disappointment at not being able to find a large and influential enough parent constituency in their district to represent. Parents had become less active in many districts.

One result of these changes in the backgrounds of CSB members has been a deterioration in CSB effectiveness. If early CSBs had an unclear definition of their role when decentralization began, later ones had an even vaguer one. Many abdicated their policy role and got deeply involved in district administration, stifling the superintendent and professional staff on matters that should not have concerned them. They became embroiled as well in internal, factionalized differences that too often became highly personalized and visible to the community, thereby losing whatever credibility and legitimacy they had before. Most importantly, educational policy matters took little if any precedence for these boards, while administration and "politics" (patronage) became primary interests. In one district, for example, a central board administrator came to talk with a CSB representative about the district having its own breakfast and lunch programs. As soon as it became apparent that this administrator had no patronage jobs to hand out, the CSB representative expressed disinterest and got up and left. The issue of whether or not the food programs would be good for the children was not a consideration for that CSB member.

The general behavior of recent CSBs often reflects this decline. Attendance at meetings seems to have fallen off. CSB members follow through much less on committee assignments. And these boards too often perform no useful educational (policy) or representational function.

(b) Community School Boards and Superintendents - As indicated, the relationship between CSBs and their superintendents has been one of considerable strain in many districts throughout the city. It has worked out relatively well in several of the districts we have described, but even there, the conflicts have sometimes been severe and have hampered the effectiveness of the superintendent and CSB. In the poor Hispanic district, its very effective superintendent spent a year struggling with a new board that tried to curb his authority in many areas and moved into administration with a vengeance. In the poor black district, the superintendent has been in an almost constant battle with his board over what they regarded was his non-conservative style. And the same conflicts have existed elsewhere. Some of this reflects what sociologist Charles Bidwell has referred to as a "creative tension" between boards

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and their superintendents, but some has clearly gone beyond that, reflecting negative political forces in the districts that we have already described.*

Some superintendents throughout the city have become what one former headquarters administrator referred to as the "whipping boys" of their boards that are themselves factionalized and have few education-oriented priorities. To the extent that such boards do not play a policy role, not knowing even what such a role would involve, and insist instead on remaining involved in detailed administrative matters, this conflict, between them and their superintendents may well continue. Selecting and managing a superintendent is the most significant power that CSBs have under decentralization, and for some board members who have never been in such a position of power before, there may be a temptation to misuse it in this relationship. The general issue of professional vs. lay power in education is a difficult one under any circumstances, and under decentralization as it worked out in New York City, it seems to have been more difficult than is typically the case.

The usual problems include misdirected actions on both sides. CSBs fail to establish broad district policies, treat the superintendent too much like a subordinate employee rather than as a professional who has been selected as the educational leader of the district, and become too involved in detailed administrative matters which they don't have the staff or expertise to handle and that are really the superintendent's prerogative. Not respecting the superintendent's authority, they demand immediate contact with district office staff or individual principals on some matter that has come to their attention, rather than first informing the superintendent and letting him follow up and then report back to them. In these situations, it basically becomes a matter of trust between the two parties, and for individual CSB members to by-pass the superintendent like that is not only to undermine his authority (principals and district office staff are first responsible to him) but to indicate a lack of trust in his capacity to take corrective action.

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* Charles Bidwell, "The School as a Formal Organization," James March (ed.), Handbook of Organizations, Rand McNally, 1965, pp. 972-1022.

Superintendents, on their side, contribute to the conflicts as well. Some make unilateral decisions on critical policy matters and only inform the board after the fact; they fail to keep the board informed on major issues; they treat the board in a patronizing manner as unsophisticated lay people who don't understand the complexities of educational issues; or they flood the board with so much unsynthesized information that it is difficult even for sophisticated board members to sift through it and find out what it is all about. These are tactics that professionals often use to maintain their power and autonomy. If the board is relatively inactive and divided, as some have been in recent years in New York City, the superintendent may get away with such tactics over the short term, particularly if the superintendent is skilled at playing off individuals and/or major factions against one another. The chances are, however, that the present or succeeding boards will eventually put a stop to this and they may, in turn, curb the superintendent's authority so much that he cannot function.

Unless this conflict is better resolved, districts are going to have a harder time recruiting and keeping able superintendents. In one district, for example, the conflict between the superintendent and CSB was so intense that one leading educator there who had been in line for the superintendency indicated that he wouldn't subject himself to what he referred to as the "public castration" that his superintendent had faced at the hands of that board.

(c) Headquarters - In order for decentralization to work, it is important that headquarters play new technical assistance and monitoring roles. It played those roles minimally and poorly in the early years of decentralization, to such a degree that districts overspent their budgets and were permitted to engage in questionable financial practices without censure. In fact, in one year (1972), the districts overhired so much relative to their budgets that the entire school budget was expended more than two months before the end of the fiscal year. When staff from the Economic Development Council, an outside management consultant group, pointed that out to top headquarters officials, they didn't know anything about it and at first denied that it could ever happen. There were, in addition, a few blatant cases of districts engaged in very questionable spending practices (no show jobs, vast sums of expenditures unaccounted for, blatant patronage appointments of unqualified people, board members taking long trips...) that were allowed to go on for a long time. Indeed, some supporters of decentralization felt that headquarters staff less supportive of the concept almost preferred it this way, so that these districts could "hang themselves" and indicate how "bad" decentralization was as a reform strategy.

Headquarters has improved its monitoring and technical assistance since those early days. There is a district management support team, and there are staff from several headquarters departments (e.g. budget, personnel, funded programs, community school district affairs) who have been helpful to the districts. Though a lot more could be done to turn headquarters into a service agency, some of its departments seem to have been moving in that direction. There is still, however, much bureaucratic red tape and obstruction of district programs.

As political scientist Marilyn Gittell has pointed out, there have been different types of district-headquarters relationships under different chancellors, reflecting the latters' different styles.* Under Chancellor Macchiarola, she suggests an activist, managerially-oriented administrator, with well-developed political networks in the city, a recentralization has been taking place. He has attempted to centrally mandate new programs to effect improvements in student achievement, thereby limiting the flexibility of districts to adopt curriculum priorities that match their local needs and capabilities.

Part of the problem between headquarters and the districts is that many district staff and, even more so, district lay people (parents, CSB members) harbor an inherent distrust of headquarters. Such a field headquarters conflict is characteristic of most large-scale organizations, in the private as well as public sector, but it is probably greater when the headquarters is as bureaucratic as that in the New York City public school system has been.

(d) Parents - One of the disappointments of decentralization has been the limited participation of parents in school affairs. In some formerly middle class districts, where there was an infrastructure before, there is active parent involvement -- in school and district curriculum committees, in reviews of appointment, promotion, and tenure decisions on staff, and in other matters (e.g., school construction, integration, enrichment programs).

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* See Marilyn Gittell, in Horton reader.

Poverty area districts, however, still have very limited parent involvement. Many parents have become discouraged about being able to influence district decisions. In a period of fiscal crisis for the city, many don't see much of a remaining role for districts. And with inflation and declining real income in such areas, where people were already at the bottom end of the scale, more parents are working and holding a second job. They don't have the time or energy to become involved in school affairs.

One significant trend has been a widespread pattern of co-optation of parents by the schools and the district office. Principals use Parent Advisory Councils (PACs), for example, to absorb parent leaders and then use them as informants on actions and intentions of those still outside. And sometimes, activist parents are given jobs in the district office or as paraprofessionals or school neighborhood workers to similarly blunt their protest activities. This often has important benefits to a school or district, in the sense of incorporating skills that enhance education. But it dilutes parent protest activity that is also functional for improved education.

In any event, parent participation has existed in some districts under decentralization, but it has not been a force to the extent that community control advocates had hoped. Parents have been selectively involved in district staffing decisions, as in appointments and tenure decisions on the community superintendent, principals, and teachers, and in supporting particular educational programs. Perhaps if the districts were given more powers and parents saw their involvement as making more of a difference in the way schools and districts were run, then they would participate more than they have.

(e) Curriculum and Instruction - Some districts, such as the ones described in the last chapter, have taken many initiatives in educational program development. Others, however, have done so on a more limited basis. When decentralization goes well, it leads to significant program improvements, and on a district-wide scale. The political and adminstrative conflicts that we have described in this study and prevent a district from being effective thus have to be minimized in any future re-design of the districts and headquarters.

(f) Staff Training and Development - The same general conclusions hold for staff training and development. Some districts have a lot of it, while others do less, again as related to the formal authority of the superintendent and the initiatives the superintendent takes in this area. And since the extent to which this important function is carried out reflects how the district is organized and staffed at the top, recommendations for its improvement are contingent on those structural improvements taking place.

(g) Integration and Neighborhood Stabilization - When decentralization first became a contested issue in New York City, those groups opposing it argued that it would lead to increasing separatism and that whatever integration efforts were already underway would be stifled by local groups trying to build an ethnic power base. Groups like the teachers' union maintained that desegregation requires strong central leadership, rather than the local veto groups that would emerge under decentralization.

Our study suggests that desegregation can be accomplished quite effectively by an individual district, as exemplified by considerable success in this regard. We concluded from that case that when conditions are favorable, a district can do much better at desegregating its students than central because its staff are much closer to the local situation. They know more at first hand what the local needs and problems are, who are the leaders and groups whose support must be mobilized, and how their input can be secured for the development and implementation of the program.

Beyond that, this district illustrates how to pursue effectively a neighborhood stabilization strategy to keep an area from tipping, by developing programs that retain and attract back the white middle class. That has rarely, if ever, happened under central board leadership, at least in the New York City public schools.

On the other hand, several of the districts we studied have not taken much initiative on this issue. Does this mean that the teachers' union was right, and that decentralization basically strengthens those local groups (black and white) who are likely to resist desegregation? We would like to conclude that that may well be the case and that future changes in decentralization should take that into account.

Several points are relevant in this regard. First, central should be mandated to play an active role in pressing districts to desegregate, where conditions seem to warrant that action and where local groups are vetoing it. Such conditions would encompass situations where minority areas within a district are severely overcrowded and where schools in white middle class areas are substantially underutilized. They might also include those situations where many schools within an entire minority district are overcrowded, while those in an adjacent white, middle class

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are underutilized. Interdistrict plans would then have to be pressed from central, though it should try to get the participating districts -- their superintendents, boards, and community groups -- to take as much of the leadership and initiative as possible.

Second, the same restructuring we spoke about earlier, developing CSBs that play mainly a policy role and delegate much formal authority to their superintendents, would help on this issue, particularly where board and superintendents develop a consensus on district priorities and on role definitions. Where that has happened, desegregation efforts have been successful.

(i) Marginal Teachers and Principals - One of the most difficult problems that community school districts have faced has been what to do about marginal teachers and principals. Decentralization advocates assumed that under a community school district system, it would be easier to handle such people, and that has been so in some instances. We have described in the case studies, for example, how principals, some near retirement, were eased out of districts where the CSB, superintendent, and/or parents did not regard their skills or orientations as any longer matching district needs. Sometimes, this led to appointments of more effective principals as judged by student achievement, and sometimes it did not. It almost invariably reflected a trend toward ethnic succession which had been one of the original, if not always explicitly stated, goals of decentralization.

On that level, then, decentralization has made a difference. And superintendents are able to exercise closer supervision over their principals than before. Moreover, if parents are extremely dissatisfied with a principal, they can make their voice heard and may have influence in a district decisions regarding that principal's tenure. Parent groups throughout the city have become increasingly sophisticated since decentralization on matters of evaluating principals and teachers.

Dealing with marginal teachers, however, is another matter. Experienced New York City educators estimate that up to 10 or 15% of the teachers in any given school perform "unsatisfactorily". Some can be helped through closer supervision, in-service training, and other forms of technical assistance. Others, however, some with severe psychiatric problems, are beyond help and should be removed, both for their sake and that of the children they are not serving. The cost of doing that, of bringing up teachers on "charges", going through the several-step grievance procedure, and making a strong enough case against what is often very strong union opposition, is quite prohibitive. Decentralization has clearly made few, if any, changes in the collective bargaining contract or in the power of the union, so in that sense, this serious problem remains. And given the city's severe fiscal crisis, districts don't have the slack resources needed to pursue such cases. They have all they can do to keep the instructional programs going in some reasonably satisfactory manner. Whether under decentralization or centralization, this problem will have to be dealt with better, perhaps through some political tradeoffs with the union which has been so resistant in many cases to what the districts regard as justifiable decisions for "unsatisfactory" teachers to leave.

Some districts have pursued quite productive strategies on this issue that should be emulated by others and spread elsewhere. The poor black district, for example, has the "marginal teacher" program we described earlier, and it has upgraded the classroom skills of many teachers who would otherwise have continued in the same unproductive manner that they had before. A continuous relationship is set up between a district office staff person and a marginal teacher in that district -- with that designation given only to teachers who both the principals and district office staff agree is not performing adequately. They decide jointly on a course of action to upgrade the teacher's performance, with one of the options being the transfer of that teacher out of the school or even out of the district, if the teacher cannot be helped.

Another strategy that some districts have developed has been to train principals in documentation, so that when they do bring up a teacher on charges, the union will be unlikely to overturn their decision. It is unfortunate that limited district resources should have to be spent in such activity, but since the problem is so severe in some cases, and since the union has been so inflexible in reacting to many of them, the effort seems necessary. One superintendent has considerable skill in this area and he has trained his staff well to follow-up on those cases where the documentation is unequivocal and complete. Many other districts are going to have to deal as effectively with this problem. Thus far, they have not received that much back-up help from headquarters, which is a further issue that would have to be explored.

(i) District Monitoring and Evaluation of Programs - Decentralization advocates had hoped that under that kind of system there would be better local evaluation of programs -- through a more effective feedback than could ever exist under centralization -- and that more corrective actions for program improvement would then be taken. Some districts do this, and effective program directors under decentralization do have more flexibility and resources to take corrective action than their counterparts under centralization.

By and large, however, evaluation remains very limited in the community school districts. There is no effective "productivity orientation" as there is in some parts of the private sector or in those public agencies where the service is more clearly defined and measurable. Few school districts anywhere in the nation have reportedly adopted much of that orientation, probably reflecting both the ambiguous nature of the service (diffuse goals and criteria for assessment) and the power of the professionals who understandably don't want to be held accountable for their performance in those instances when it is affected by factors outside their control (student backgrounds, level of classroom and school resources, etc.)* But this has been one of the limitations of decentralization in New York City.

Again, there are some districts that are developing effective strategies in this area. The superintendentin the poor black district has regular audits and tests of student performance. And its marginal teacher program is certainly an attempt to improve teacher productivity. Its steady improvement in reading scores and attendance rates indicate that the strategy is paying off. Other districts, with their own styles, might well incorporate, with appropriate adaptations, some of the effective monitoring and evaluation strategies of District E.

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* See, for example, Robert L. Rish and Hugh O. Nourse, Urban Economics and Policy Analysis, McGraw Hill, New York, 1975.

(j) District Boundaries - One of the most politicized aspects of decentralization has been the drawing of district lines. No consistent criteria seems to have been applied across the city, except some general ones about maintaining district size above a certain level. Final decisions on this matter seemed to be a "political resultant", depending on whose local turfs got defended, rather than in terms of some other, more "rational" criteria. Accepting the fact that most policy and strategy decisions get made that way, in the private as well as public sector, the results have, in this agency, detracted from district effectivenness.

A few critical issues will have to be addressed in the next couple of years, when the issue comes up again for public review. It would probably help improve service delivery in many areas, not just education, if serious consideration were given to making school districts as coterminal as possible with others, in line with reforms now underway in New York City government more generally. The schools do need to collaborate with many other agencies to perform effectively and having a common information base and constituency would help.

In addition, some districts have proved unmanageable, in large part because of their diversity. District C is one of the most extreme examples of this. Its ethnic and class polarization between white populations in the north and poor minorities in on the south have made it extremely difficult to maintain enough political stability to permit the superintendent and CSB to manage effectively. And several other districts face the same problem. Unless CSBs and superintendents find better ways to bridge these interest group conflicts, there seems little to be gained from having such ethnically diverse districts.

On the other hand, a different solution seems suggested in other districts. Some are now so small that serious questions may be raised as to their future viability, given the limited economies of scale that exist. These are some that have lost a lot of their student population since decentralization began. One might argue, of course, that these districts have finally reached a small enough population to finally be manageable; and that argument is often made by local power groups solidifying their political base under decentralization. We have no ultimate solution, except to say that consolidation may well be considered appropriate in some of these cases, just as redrawing district lines to limit a dysfunctional ethnic diversity is appropriate to others. Coterminality provides still another set of criteria for redrawing district lines.

(k) Particular Educational Policy Issues - A number of governance and policy issues have emerged recently under decentralization. One set relates to those parts of the New York City school system that are still centralized. There is now a significant groundswell of sentiment in many districts to have those functions decentralized. A number of high schools around the city, for example, have put in requests to the districts where they are located and to the Chancellor that they be administatively separated from the centralized high school office and be made part of their district. The Chancellor has established a committee to look into the matter, but little more has been done. As one community superintendent reported: "Even as recently as a few years ago, you wouldn't have found much support from high schools to become affiliated wtih districts, but that is all changing now, and there are high schools in almost every borough that are making that request. This is a new development."

Some of the same sentiments exist with regard to special education as well, that is, programs for handicapped students. Districts have resented having to deal with a central office that they felt has been poorly managed. These districts now have extensive programs that they would like to control themselves, subject, of course, to general policy guidelines. The districts feel they know much better than absentee administrators at headquarters what their local needs and capabilities are.

In brief, many of the same issues that were raised in the 1960s about the limitations of centralized, top-down management from school headquarters are increasingly being raised about those functions that have remained centralized. It is still unclear as to how much political pressure may build up from the districts in regard to decentralizing these functions, but it does seem exist. The fact that it has increased in a period of fiscal cutback, district demoralization, and parent and citizen apathy suggests that it may be more than a minor ripple that will soon die out.

The junior high schools represent another problematic part of the system. They were a major problem before decentralization and have remained so. One part of that problem has been the strong parental fears about their children leaving neighborhood schools to attend schools farther away, with student of other ethnic and economic backgrounds. Indeed, the middle class exodus from the public schools often begins at this age, with families either moving out to the suburbs or sending their children to parochial, private, or boarding schools. One proposed solution that has gained increasing support in white middle class areas is to convert some of their "good" elementary schools to K-8. Some of these schools are already integrated and are likely to retain their middle class through such a change. Also, parents' fears for their children's safety would be eased by such an arrangement.

A number of districts have, in fact, taken important initiatives to upgrade their junior highs, particularly those in poverty aras. The poor Hispanic district has the network of alternative schools that we have described, most of them at the junior high level. The poor black district has its new satellite junior highs and its many new programs for gifted and talented students in existing ones. District D has several new programs that de-departmentalize its junior highs and provide a number of programs and educational experiences in a more humanistic, community-like setting for low-achieving students. And District E has provided many new enrichment programs in some of its junior highs to retain the middle class there. If some kind of information and dissemination mechanism might be more fully developed, other districts might be able to adopt some of the effective elements from these programs.

The other major programs on which there are many unresolved issues it bilingual education. It has grown considerably in New York City, as elsewhere, with new court orders and with the strong ethnic consciousness of new immigrant groups. Many of the controversies over bilingual education -- for example, maintenance vs. mainstreaming, coerced vs. voluntary enrollment -- get played out in the districts. And it is obvious that this program has become very politicized. It provides many jobs for bilingual educators, and those jobs constitute threats to non-bilingual teachers whose position and tenure the union is pushing strongly to preserve. While we have not systematically evaluated bilingual programs in districts, our experience suggests that those that include more instruction in English at an earlier age have considerably higher student performance than those that do not. The advocates of maintenance approaches, then, who play down English instruction, in favor of that in the student's native language, have not made much of a case in terms of how students do under that arrangement. Indeed, in one district, we found dramatic differences in student reading scores between bilingual programs that emphasized the early teaching of English and those that did not.

These are some of the unresolved problems, then, of decentralization. Rather than conveying a negative view about its prospects, they suggest some of the administrative, structural, and program issues that will have to be addressed in the future. Our studies incidate that they might well be handled better under a decentralized than a centralized system. The important point, however, is that they would only be handled effectively under a re-constituted, decentralized system. We have given some preliminary indications as to the directions that such a restructuring should take, but that task remains to be done. It should be much easier as a result of information put together in this study.

There are some participants from the New York City decentralization struggle who argue that the issue is no logner salient there. They see it as a product of the militancy and political activism of the 60s. Our case studies indicate that the way schools are managed and governed makes a big difference in the quality of educational services that are delivered.

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4. Board of Education Reports and Statistical Documents

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Office of Educational Statistics, data on promotions and attendance, 1970 to present.

Office of Educational Statistics, staff ethnic reports from annual school census, 1970-71 through 1977-78.

Office of Funded Programs, data on reimbursable funds received by districts.

Office of Funded Programs, Bureau of ESEA, Title I, data on student socio-economic status, by district, 1971-72 to present.

Office of Planning, Programming, and Budget, data on district office budget schedules.

Office of Zoning and Integration, data on ethnic characteristics of students by school and district, 1970 to present.

Office of Zoning and Integration, data on school utilization, 1970 to present.

Division of curriculum and Instruction, data on citywide reading test results, 1970 to present.

School Profiles, 1973-74, 1974-75, 1975-76. Contains a comprehensive statistical description of schools and districts for those years.

Board of elections of New York City, statistical data on CSB elections.

5. Interviews

Roughly 550 over the period from September, 1978 through July, 1981. CSB members, superintendents, district office staff, principals, teachers, parents, headquarters staff, business, labor, univeristy officials, civic group leaders, state education department staff.